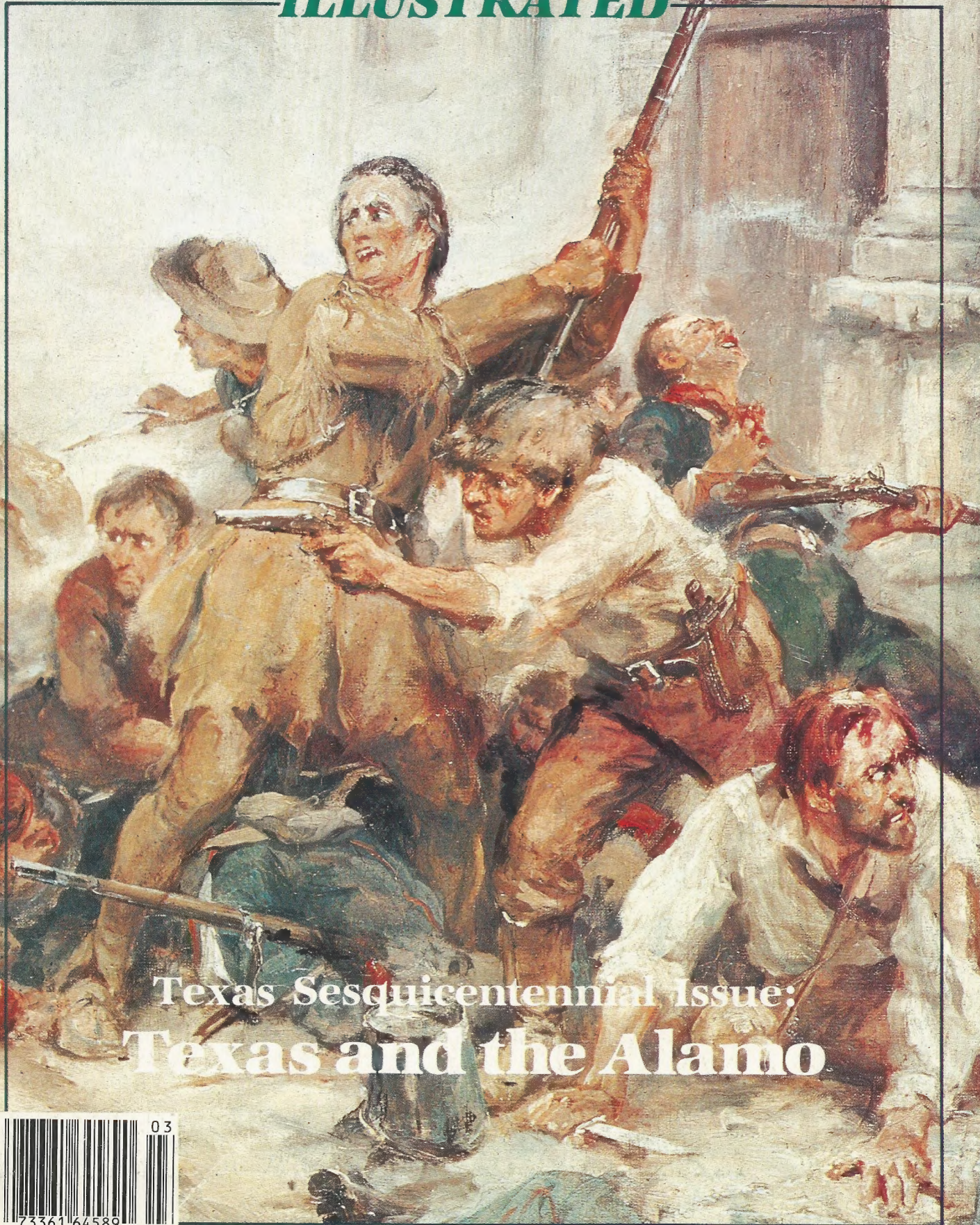


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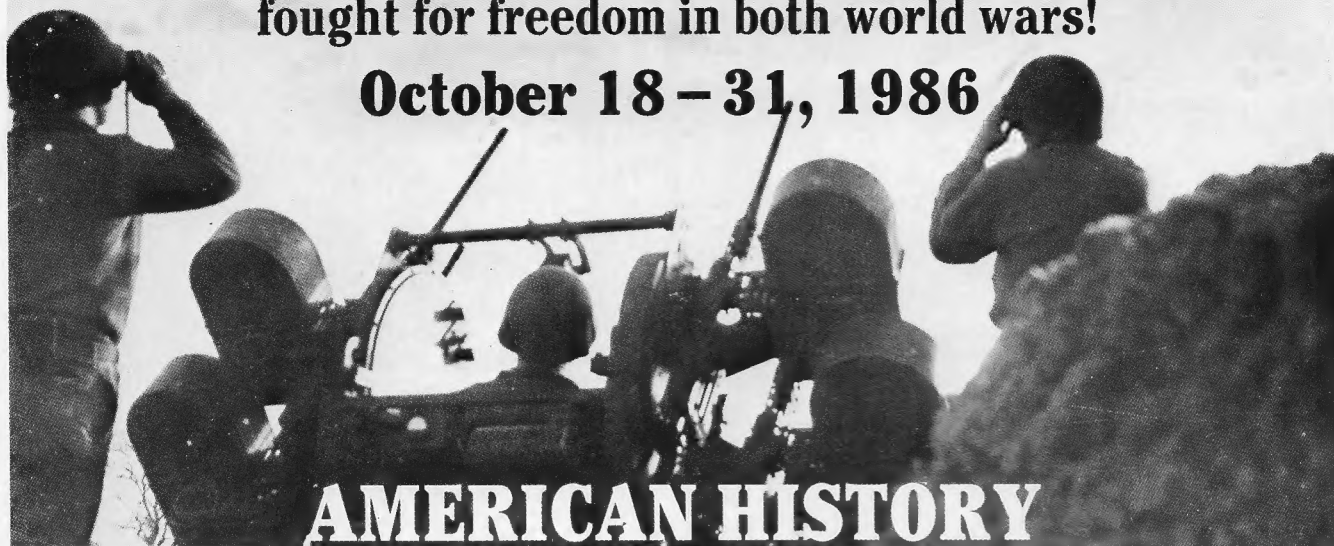


Texas Sesquicentennial Issue:
Texas and the Alamo



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D-Day and Beyond

A battle can have only so much meaning in the pages of a book. To fully grasp what happened, you must visit the beaches, hills, towns and cities — stand on the ground where the fighting took place.

Distinguished military historian Dr. Martin Blumenson has agreed to lead a limited number of tourists on a tour of European battle sites. He will explain, on the spot, the strategies, maneuvers, the outcome of the action!

Please hurry — space is limited. Reserve today to avoid disappointment.

Itinerary:

Saturday, October 18. Fly USA to London.

Sunday, October 19. Cocktail party, welcoming dinner and tour briefing by Dr. Blumenson tonight. (CB, D)

Monday, October 20. Visit Churchill's Command Post, the Imperial War Museum, and other sites associated with the Allied High Command. This evening is free for London theater. (CB)

Tuesday, October 21. Tour Portsmouth. Visit the Tank Museum at Bovington Camp. Dinner in Portsmouth before the overnight sea crossing to Cherbourg, France. (CB, D)

Wednesday, October 22. From Cherbourg, tour Omaha and Utah D-Day Landing Beaches and the American Military Cemetery. Dinner and overnight in Caen. (CB, D)

Thursday, October 23. Tour the Invasion Museum on the beach of Arromanches. Enjoy a Norman lunch in the Pays d'Auge region; tour a calvados (applejack) distillery. Return to Caen. (CB, L)

Friday, October 24. Tour the Falaise Gap region, where the German 7th Army counter-attacked in August, 1944. The Allies encircled and defeated

Personally guided by Dr. Martin Blumenson — former faculty member of the National War College, author of *Patton: The Man Behind the Legend*.

the Germans at the Falaise-Mortain Pocket. Overnight at Caen. (CB)

Saturday, October 25. Visit St.-Lo. Tour Avranches, where General Patton's Third Army broke the German left flanks. Dinner and overnight in St. Malo. (CB, D)

Sunday, October 26. Visit Mont-St.-Michel Abbey and the Gothic Cathedral of Notre Dame at Chartres. Continue to Paris. Next three nights in Paris. (CB, D)

Monday, October 27. Full day at leisure in Paris, one of the most fascinating and beautiful cities in the world. (CB)

Tuesday, October 28. Tour Chateau Thierry, site of the successful American battle of Belleau Wood. Visit Compiègne. (CB)

Wednesday, October 29. Tour Reims; visit General Eisenhower's War Room, where the Germans surrendered in 1945. Tour the defenses at Verdun, principal fortress facing Germany. Dinner and overnight at Verdun. (CB, D)

Thursday, October 30. Visit Meuse-Argonne Cemetery. Continue to Bastogne, site of the Battle of the Bulge. Arrive in Luxembourg, visit American Military Cemetery at Hamm, where General Patton and over 5,000 American soldiers rest. Farewell dinner and overnight at Luxembourg. (CB, D)

Friday, October 31. Transfer to Frankfurt for return flight home. (CB)

D — Dinner

L — Lunch

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 Austin, Texas

Buckles shown actual size.

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At stake was Texas' freedom, and the defenders of that freedom included the legendary Davy Crockett, Lt. Colonel William Travis, and Jim Bowie, the famous knifeman.

As history notes, the bloody battle that ensued would be lost to the Mexicans. But the war for Texas' independence would eventually be won, thanks to the inspiration and courage shown by Crockett, Travis, Bowie, and those brave men and women of the Alamo.

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AMERICAN HISTORY ILLUSTRATED

VOLUME XX, NUMBER 11 MARCH 1986



Special Texas Sesquicentennial Issue

8

Texas: A Locater Map

12

The Alamo: An American Epic by Paul Andrew Hutton.

Choosing to fight to the death rather than submit to tyranny, a courageous band of Texans changed the course of history.

38

Alamo Images by Susan Prendergast Schoelwer

An exhibition traces the iconography of a heroic battle and an enduring American symbol.

46

The Men of Gonzales by Paula Mitchell Marks

Though facing almost certain death, they answered the Alamo garrison's call for help when no one else could or would.

48

Lone Star Rising by Archie P. McDonald

A Texas historian explores the epic history of his home region before and after the Alamo.

52

Continuing Battles for the Alamo by Paul Andrew Hutton

One hundred and fifty years after the last Alamo defender fell, a struggle continues — this time over preservation of the historic site.

Departments

5 Mailbox

6 History Bookshelf



Cover

Exactly one hundred and fifty years have passed since Texans at the Alamo chose to fight to the death for freedom and independence. In a detail from Frederick C. Yohn's circa-1913 painting, Alamo defender Davy Crockett and a few companions make their last stand against soldiers of Mexican general Santa Anna. This special issue is devoted entirely to the Alamo battle and the republic and state it helped to create.

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Mailbox

Another "Darkest Day"

Reading "New England's Darkest Day" in the December 1985 issue reminded me of another "darkest day" that occurred in north-central Pennsylvania in 1948 or 1949. No big fuss was ever kicked up about it, and the newspapers said almost nothing.

I was at a hunting camp in the big woods near Marienville, Pennsylvania, when the darkness came. It was a Saturday or Sunday early afternoon, and it just got darker and darker.

Like the chickens in the story, I went to roost. Laid down and napped for two hours. There was no odor in the air of fire or burning. The clouds were not low like fog. They were at a normal height for clouds—up in the air!

By four or five o'clock you could see to drive without headlights (it was summer), and we headed home. Everyone said the "government" was testing an anti-bombing device that obscured thousands of miles of target area—a device that had not been called into use during the war. The newspapers said that huge fires burning in Canada caused all the smoke to develop.

No one smelled any smoke, and I would not have gone to sleep in a cabin in the woods if I smelled any smoke from a forest fire!

Everyone knew, of course, that the newspapers and radio could report only what the government wanted reported. And we were all war-time conditioned to accept odd things that were glossed over, thinly veiled and even outright lied about. We knew better than to argue with the officials about what they wanted the record to show. So we all kept quiet, and now no one even remembers.

The exact dates are not important; anyone that experienced this will remember it.

Jack Salsgiver
Garrettsville, Ohio

I read with real interest the article on New England's "darkest day."

When I was in grade school during the mid-1940s, the very same thing happened in northwestern Pennsylvania. My family was visiting friends in a town called Eldred when it began getting dark at about (as I recall) one in the afternoon. We returned home to Smethport, Pennsylvania, in complete darkness, and on the farm the chickens had all gone to roost. At about 5:00 or 5:30 daylight began to show, and we then had a normal sunset.

Speculation had it that the Army

was trying a new secret weapon to make it dark. Another idea was that forest fires in Canada or West Virginia were the cause. I don't recall ever hearing the exact cause if it ever was determined.

Jerome Kleisath
Little York, New York

I read with interest the article by Sandra Hansen Konte.

A similar phenomenon occurred in western Pennsylvania on September 24, 1950. I was working for my father on the farm, and it being Sunday I was at my house in town. After dinner I laid down for my usual Sunday afternoon nap, and when I awoke it was totally dark and I could see the lights on in all the neighboring homes.

I thought I had overslept, and I felt a feeling of distaste when I thought of Father having had to do all the chores alone. However, when I looked at my watch and the kitchen clock, I discovered that it was only midafternoon.

My wife and I couldn't figure it out, and I immediately drove out to the farm (with the car lights on). Father was standing out by the barn, as puzzled as I. The chickens had all gone to roost, and all the street lights were on. In about an hour or so, it started to get daylight again.

The next day the Warren paper told how the heavy overcast of smoke from huge forest fires in Canada had turned the afternoon into night . . . Fans attending the Pittsburgh-Cincinnati baseball doubleheader at Pittsburgh's Forbes Field saw part of the first game and all of the second under lights. The same situation was true at Erie, where the Erie Veterans opened their All American Football League season. An airline pilot flying over Erie at twenty-five thousand feet reported he had to use instruments.

The darkness had many people thinking in terms of an atomic bomb or "Judgment Day" until radio broadcasts explained that the blackout was caused by smoke palls.

Wallace Barlow
Sugar Grove, Pennsylvania

American History Illustrated welcomes comments from our readers. While we endeavor to publish a representative sampling of this correspondence, we regret that limited space prevents us from printing every letter. Address correspondence to The Mailbox, American History Illustrated, Box 8200, Harrisburg, PA 17105. ★

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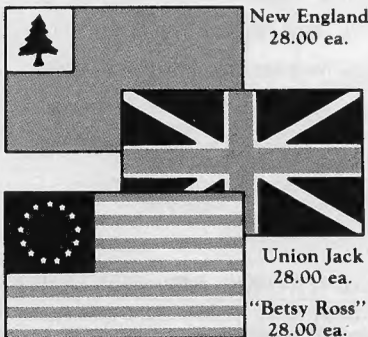
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Before the Trumpet: Young Franklin Roosevelt 1882-1905

by Geoffrey C. Ward (*Harper & Row, New York, 1985; 390 pages, illustrated, \$19.95*).

This new biography of Franklin Roosevelt traces his life from childhood years up to his marriage to his cousin Eleanor. How Roosevelt's background and upbringing contributed to his character and subsequent career as politician and president is the theme of Ward's study. More than just the story of Roosevelt's privileged youth—he was a product of the “white glove” societies of Harvard and Hudson River mansions—and his eventual marriage to Eleanor, *Before the Trumpet* also portrays a lifestyle of yachts, balls, and high society snobbery long since vanished from the American scene. The FDR who emerges from these pages is a gifted but lonely youth, struggling against inbred affections that would alienate him at Groton and Harvard, and against the total domination of his remarkable mother, Sara Delano Roosevelt. Also included are Warren Delano, FDR's grandfather, whose family made its immense fortune by trading—primarily opium—with China; Franklin's little-known half-brother “Rosy”; his famous cousin Theodore, whom FDR emulated from his earliest years; and Alice Sohler, the Bostonian debutante who turned down his marriage offer, driving him to his cousin Eleanor. For this biography Ward has drawn on thousands of original documents, many never before examined. Two sections of family photographs enhance the narrative.

The Making of Mark Twain by John Lauber (*American Heritage and Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1985; 298 pages, illustrated, \$17.95*).

This new biography of an old literary favorite is the first to concentrate primarily on Twain's early years, from 1835 to 1870. Professor Lauber traces Twain's evolution from Samuel Clemens to the famed American author, from his rural background, his misadventures as an amateur Civil War soldier, his career as a Mississippi River pilot, to his first major writing success, *The Innocents Abroad*. Twain's father, John Clemens, was out of place in his world, says Lauber—he dreamed expansively, but his dreams never materialized. His son inherited these traits

and was to repeat his father's disastrous business history, only on a grander scale. Twain's mother, Jane Clemens, was characterized as John Clemens's opposite—from her, young Sam inherited his wholehearted enthusiasm, as well as a passion for storytelling. Twain's early days were spent in Hannibal, Missouri, and on the farm of family friends, the Quarleses, and these childhood years were the inspiration for *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*. Lauber says that Twain has told the story of his childhood so well that at first there seems no need to repeat it. But, he points out, Twain's version was often inaccurate: “He wrote autobiographical fiction and fictional autobiography.” Working in part from newly available source material, Lauber weaves a portrait of a many-sided, often contradictory personality: fiercely ambitious behind a mask of laziness, and often biting satirical despite the appearance of good humor. Primarily, the new biography tells the story of self-discovery that characterized Mark Twain and all that he would come to represent in America.

Black Wolf: The Life of Ernest Thompson Seton by Betty Keller (*Douglas & McIntyre, Vancouver and Toronto, distributed in the U.S. by Salem House, Salem, New Hampshire, 1985; 240 pages, illustrated, \$18.95*).

Best known for his founding role in the Boy Scouts of America, English immigrant Ernest Thompson Seton was a naturalist, artist, lecturer, writer, and creative genius. Although Seton's life was tainted by his eccentric hatred of his father, his vivid imagination also led to his wonderful animal stories and pictures, which have thrilled three generations of young people. Leading scientists of the day admired him as an expert naturalist, and his paintings hung in the Salon of Paris in 1891. In 1902 Seton organized the Woodcraft Indians, one of the inspirations for the yet-to-be-founded Boy Scouts of America. His interest in wolves, and his stories and paintings about them, earned him his colorful nickname, Black Wolf. Seton served as Chief Scout for the first five years of the fledgling Boy Scouts of America, and went on to build Seton Village in New Mexico, where he taught visitors the Indian way of life. Author Betty Keller

Continued on page 9

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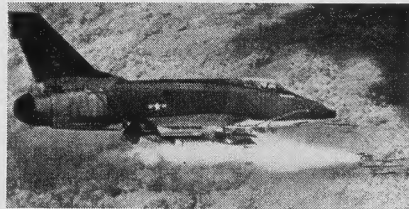
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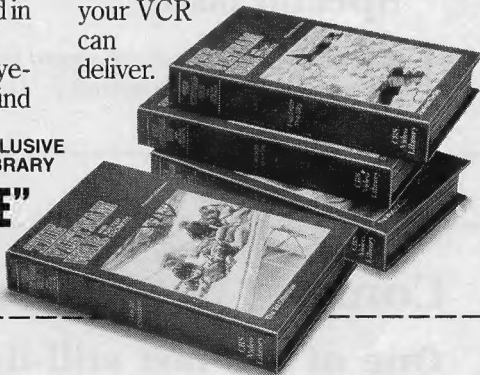


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Texas

A Locator Map for this Special Issue

[For clarity, 1836 sites are shown in relation to present-day state boundaries.]

Coming Next Month:

One of the last still-living American survivors of the *Titanic* disaster recalls the fateful night in 1912 when the “unsinkable” luxury liner sank, and . . .

We turn the clock back to April 21, 1836, and ride with volunteers at San Jacinto—the battle that gave Texas independence.

Bookshelf

Continued from page 6

ler's portrait is a poignant reminder of Seton's many contributions to the lives of North American boys, as well as a unique view of his own troubled personal life.

Trying Times: Alabama Photographs, 1917-1945 by Michael V.R. Thomason (*University of Alabama Press, University, Alabama, 1985; 300 pages, illustrated, \$36.50*).

This comprehensive and well-annotated collection of photographs depicts the variety of life experienced in Alabama during the years surrounding the two world wars. Historian Thomason presents the reader with images of a generation responding to the dynamics of such social forces as patriotic fervor, waxing and waning wartime economies, rural poverty, racial tension, and the Great Depression and New Deal. The 274 pictures include the work of both professional and amateur photographers and were gathered from private collections as well as public archives, providing a varied photographic point of view which serves to underline the humanity of the life experiences presented, whether they be images of impoverished sharecroppers, women working in defense industries, company picnics, or patriotic celebrations.

Reaping the Whirlwind: The Civil Rights Movement in Tuskegee by Robert J. Norrell (*Knopf, New York, 1985; 254 pages, illustrated, \$19.95*).

Reaping the Whirlwind is the story of Tuskegee, Alabama, coming to terms with how the roles and perceptions of blacks and whites changed in response to the civil rights movement from the 1940s to the 1970s. Using the testimony of witnesses to outline the struggle for, among many things, improved voter registration and integrated schools, stores, restaurants, and churches, the author brings to light the personal, painful nature of this fight for human rights. The experiences of this town demonstrate the kinds of changes that have taken place in the social fabric of the entire United States. As author Norrell notes, "Each community now has a story to tell about the movement, and only when many of those stories are told will the South's great social upheaval be well understood." ★

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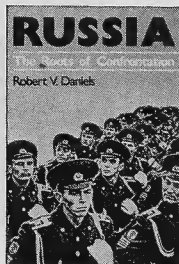
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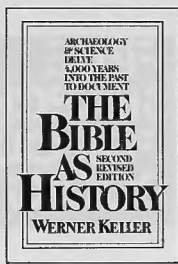
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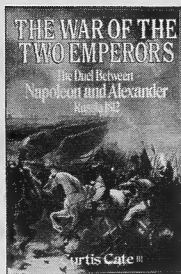
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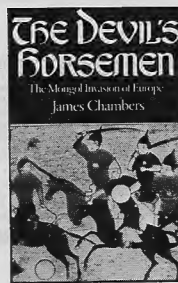
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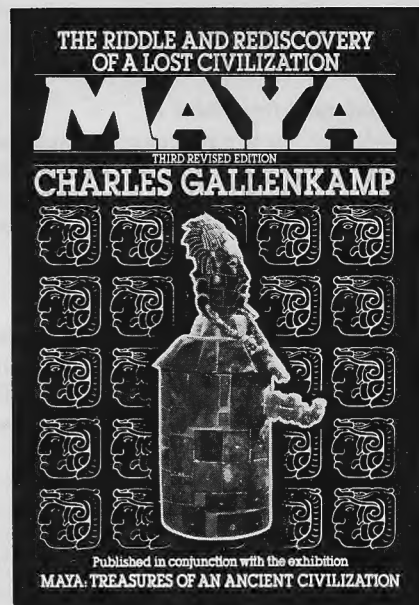
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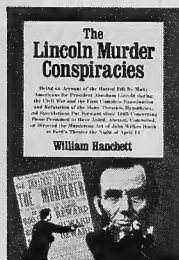
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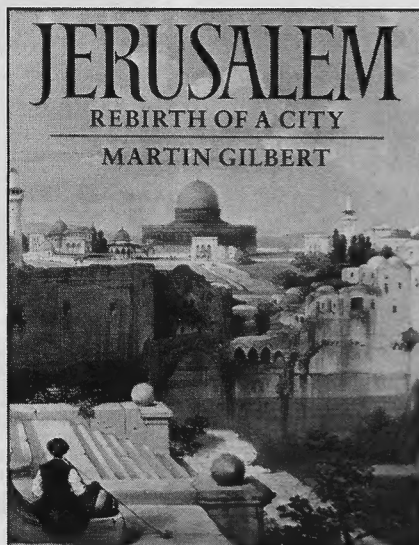
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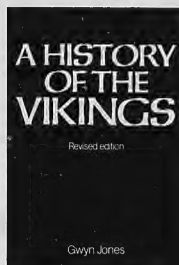
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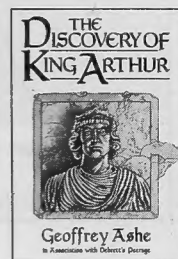
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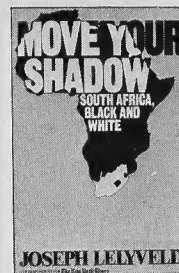
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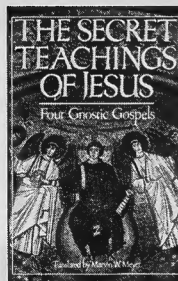
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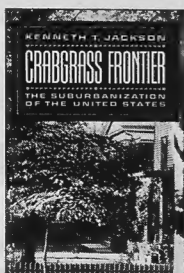
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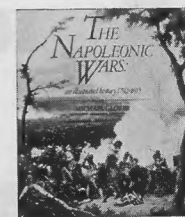
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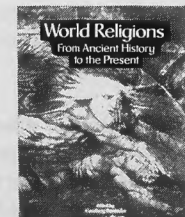
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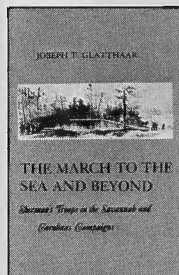
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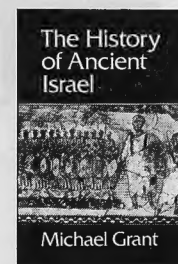
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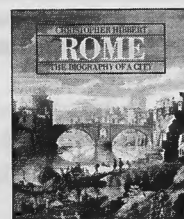
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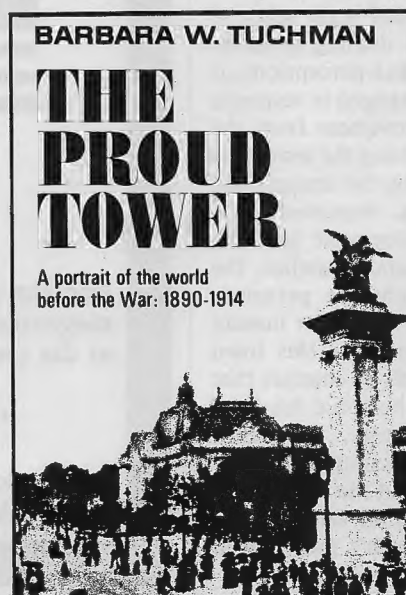
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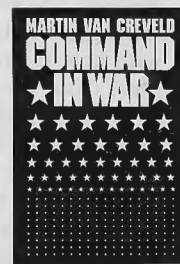
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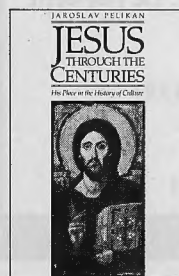
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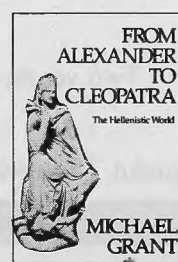
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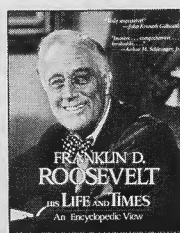
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Sacrificing their lives in the cause of independence, a small band of Texans changed the course of history.

The Alamo

An American Epic

by Paul Andrew Hutton

“THE FALL OF THE ALAMO” BY ROBERT JENKINS UNDERDUNK (1903)



William Barret Travis was an unhappy young man as he led a band of thirty dusty, bedraggled soldiers into San Antonio de Bexar on February 3, 1836. His bright dreams of martial glory were fading fast. Events seemed to be conspiring against him—even the splendid dress uniform he had ordered had failed to arrive before his departure from San Felipe de Austin. He was clad in homemade Texas jeans, hardly the proper attire for a twenty-seven-year-old cavalry officer of soaring ambition and Byronic temperament.

Travis had worked hard to win a commission as a lieutenant colonel of the Texas cavalry, a martial arm in keeping with his chivalric sensibilities and aristocratic pretensions. He had been enraged when ordered to San Antonio with only thirty men, and had threatened to resign unless reassigned to another command. "I am unwilling to risk my reputation (which is ever dear to a

volunteer)," he wrote to Provisional Texas Governor Henry Smith, "by going off into the enemy's country with so little means, so few men, and these so badly equipped—the fact is there is no necessity for my services to command these few men. The company officers will be sufficient."

Frantic final moments at the Alamo: with thin-spread Texan defenses finally overwhelmed after three fierce predawn attacks, frontiersman Davy Crockett and a handful of survivors make their last stand against a tide of Mexican troops under General Santa Anna on March 6, 1836. All but two of some 185 defenders would die at San Antonio de Bexar, but their sacrifice would provide a rallying point in the Texas Revolution, leading to overwhelming victory over Santa Anna six weeks later and to independence for Texas.



DETAIL OF THE ORIGINAL, COURTESY OF THE ARCHIVES DIVISION, TEXAS STATE LIBRARY, AUSTIN

“I shall never surrender or retreat. . . . I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible & die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his honor & that of his country —Victory or Death.”

PHOTOGRAPH BY J. D. TORRES,
COURTESY OF THE DAUGHTERS OF THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS LIBRARY AT THE ALAMO, SAN ANTONIO



Twenty-seven-year-old Lieutenant Colonel William Travis—here as depicted on the Alamo Centopath—led a gallant and spirited defense of the improvised fortress at San Antonio de Bexar, holding off Santa Anna’s more powerful Mexican army for thirteen days. True to his pledge, Travis would die by his guns.

Governor Smith ignored Travis’s tirade. He was used to them by now, for this was the young officer’s third letter of resignation. Smith was busy with more pressing matters, for the Texas army was splintering into factions, and the shaky provisional government was collapsing from within from incessant bickering. The commander of the virtually nonexistent army, Sam Houston, had gone off in disgust under the pretext of negotiating with the northern Indians to ensure their neutrality, while rumors abounded that the president of Mexico, Antonio López de Santa Anna, was marching against Texas with a strong army to suppress the rebellion. Smith needed men he could count on to guard the borders of Texas, and William Barret Travis was such a man.

Born in 1809 near Red Bank, South Carolina, William was the first of ten children of Mark and Jemima Travis. In 1818 the family moved west to Sparta, Alabama, where William grew to be a bright, ambitious six-footer with a fiery disposition to match his red hair. In his late teens he taught school and, in October 1828, married one of his students. Rosanna Cato and William Barret Travis seemed destined to happiness. Travis studied law with James Delett, a leading Alabama lawyer, and soon had a promising legal practice. Rosanna bore him a son, Charles, and was soon pregnant again.

Then, in 1831, everything suddenly fell apart. Travis discovered that his wife had been unfaithful, even doubted that the child she carried was his. He sought out her lover and killed him. With his reputation sullied and his legal career destroyed—despite the tolerance extended by the community concerning the killing—Travis mounted his horse and headed west toward Texas to begin life anew.

Despite vague assurances to Rosanna that he would send for her and the children, Travis listed himself as “single” and even as “widower” on legal documents in Texas. He settled in the port town of Anáhuac in May 1831, but soon moved inland to bustling San Felipe and opened a law practice. Travis began a cryptic but meticulous diary that recorded his passionate pursuit of the good life. He dressed stylishly, gambled incessantly, and enjoyed a rather staggering number of liaisons with various ladies—these latter adventures recorded in Spanish in his diary, with everything else in English.

When Rosanna suddenly appeared in 1834 to demand either a reconciliation or a divorce, she promptly got the divorce. Travis, however, retained custody of Charles.

Soon after arriving in Texas, Travis identified himself with radicals opposed to Mexican rule. His sentiments were similar to those of many recent emigrants to the northern Mexican province. Shortly after winning independence from Spain in 1821, the new Mexican government had offered generous land grants and exemption from taxes and trade duties to induce colonists to settle in Texas. The only requirements had been to swear allegiance to the Mexican government and to become a nominal Catholic. Men such as Stephen F. Austin had received enormous grants of land in exchange for bring-

ing bands of colonists to develop Texas under this *empresario* system. The first settlers were sober, orderly, and law-abiding, but by the 1830s adventurers of every sort were flocking to Texas in search of new fortune. Some, like Sam Houston—the Tennessee governor whose marriage had collapsed in scandal, leading him to resign and seek a new life elsewhere—were already famous. Others, like William Barret Travis, were not. But their stories were similar and their goals the same—to make a fresh start in this rich, exotic, and vast land.

By 1830 Americans made up over seventy-five percent of the population of Texas and were growing increasingly restless under inefficient, if benign, Mexican rule. Smuggling had become a way of life in Texas, illegal slavery was practiced flagrantly, and taxes were ignored. Cultural arrogance and racial antipathy further exacerbated the deteriorating situation.

In response, the Mexican government passed a new law in April 1830 that outlawed American migration into Texas, banned slavery, restricted trade, and imposed new taxes. The Texans, already angry over the refusal of the central government to consider separating them from the state of Coahuila, were incensed. To make matters worse, the Mexicans actually intended to enforce their new law. General Manuel y Terán established a string of garrisons across Texas to enforce compliance.

In June 1832, when tensions were running high, Travis decided to play a practical joke on Colonel John Bradburn, a former Kentuckian now serving Mexico as garrison commander at Anáhuac. He and a friend, Patrick Jack, warned Bradburn that a mob of armed Texans was about to descend on Anáhuac because of the colonel's rigorous enforcement of the antismuggling laws. After a tense night awaiting the onslaught, the colonel failed to share Travis's sense of humor when informed that it was all a ruse. He threw both Travis and Jack into jail.

Now the Americans really did rise—just as Travis had hoped they would—and marched on Anáhuac. The armed rebels found the prisoners tied to the ground, with muskets pointed at their heads. Travis, an avid reader of the novels of Sir Walter Scott, seized on the moment to become the *Ivanhoe* of Texas. He called on his rescuers to fire, for he would rather die in martyr to freedom than live under tyranny. But cooler heads prevailed, and the Americans withdrew to lay siege to Anáhuac.

All over east Texas men answered the call to arms. War seemed inevitable until events in Mexico thwarted young Travis's scheme. General Santa Anna, a supposed liberal, had overthrown the anti-American regime of President Anastacio Bustamante. Customs duties were temporarily suspended, Bradburn was fired, and Travis and Jack were released. Stephen F. Austin and other advocates of accommodation were elated, and their opinion now prevailed.

Seeking a peaceful solution to their grievances, the so-called “peace party” drafted petitions requesting the separation of Coahuila and Texas, repeal of the anti-immigration clause of the 1830 law, and tariff exemption. Texans at San Felipe in April 1833 also drafted a proposed state constitution, based on the Massachusetts charter of 1780. Austin was chosen to carry the petitions and constitution to Mexico City and present the views of Texans to Santa Anna.

At first Austin was successful, for Santa Anna rescinded the immigration restrictions as of May 1834. The Mexican leader also prodded the Coahuila legislature to placate the Texans by increasing the number of Texas delegates to the joint legislature, establishing trial by jury and an appellate court system for Texas, and instituting other administrative reforms.

These impressive Mexican concessions were all forgotten, however, when news reached Texas that Austin had been imprisoned. An inflammatory letter he had written to the *ayuntamiento* [governing council] of San Antonio de Bexar, urging that Texas form a state even if the central government would not consent, had fallen into the hands of government agents.

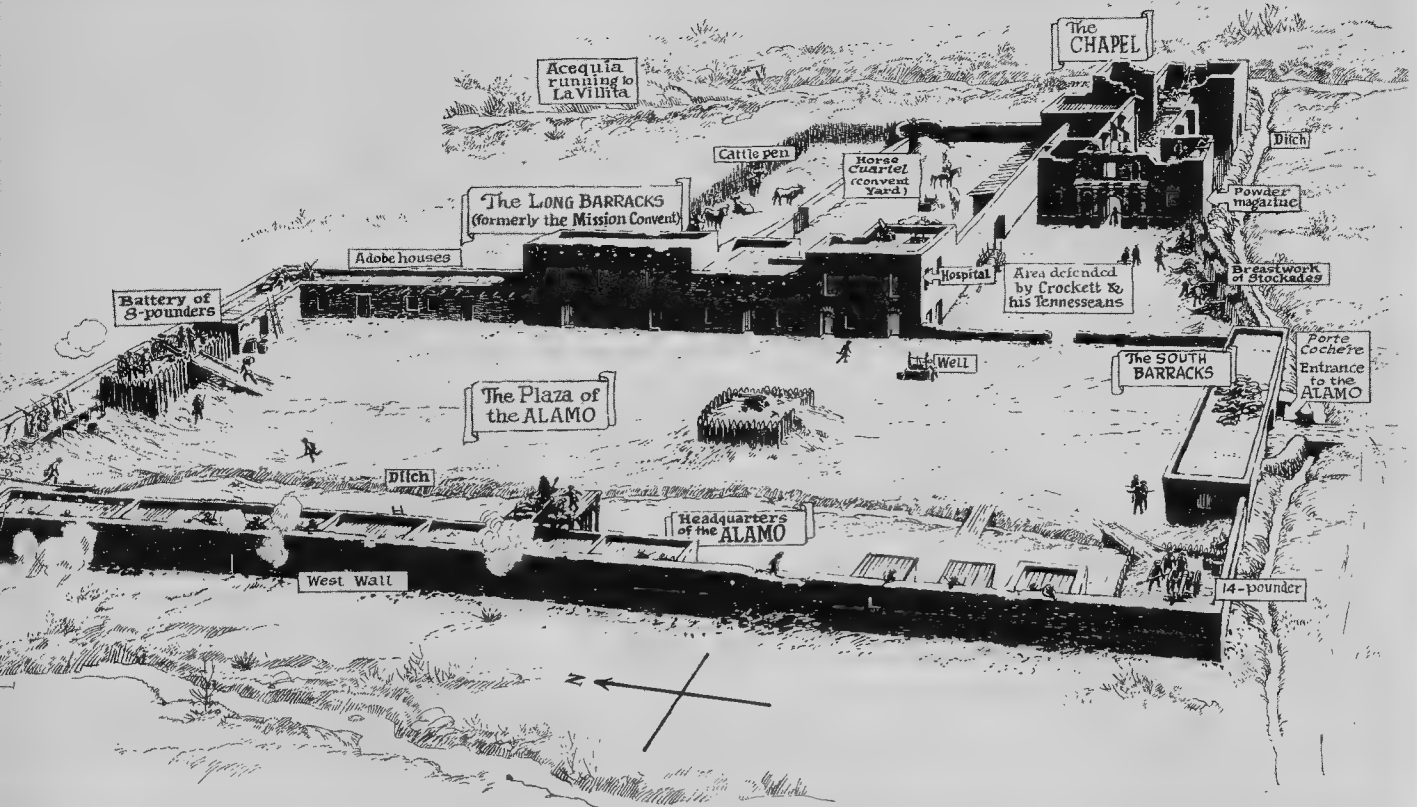
Austin remained in prison for a year before winning release on bond early in 1835. But he was still detained in Mexico City, effectively silencing the most influential voice for moderation in Texas.

With Austin out of the way, Travis and the “war party” saw their chance. The Customs House at Anáhuac had been reopened, and its commander, Captain Antonio Tenorio, was vigorously pursuing smugglers. Tensions ran high along the coast, and Travis was confident that the moment for action had come. With twenty-five men, he marched on Anáhuac and seized the Customs House on June 27, 1835.

Captain Tenorio fled to San Felipe, where the colonists were horrified by Travis's audacity. Throughout Texas, communities passed resolutions condemning Travis in the strongest terms. Humiliated, the impetuous agitator retreated into seclusion to brood over his folly. “The peace party are the strongest,” he grumbled in a letter to James Bowie, “unless we could be united, had we not better be quiet, and settle down for a while?”

But just when Travis and the “war party” were in total disgrace and the moderates were gaining the upper hand, Santa Anna decided to tighten his control over Texas—and in doing so played right into the hands of the radicals. Naturally enraged over the seizure of Anáhuac, and perplexed as to why Texas civil authorities had not arrested Travis and his men, Santa Anna ordered his brother-in-law, General Martín Perfecto de Cós, to march north with four hundred troops and establish martial law.

The news swept across Texas, and “Committees of Public Safety” were quickly organized. Travis was in the thick of the organizing, feeling jubilant and vindicated. “Although the Mexican or Tory party made a tremendous effort to put us down,” Travis wrote a friend on



August 31, "principle has triumphed over prejudice, passion, cowardice and knavery. All their measures have recoiled upon them and they are routed horse and foot . . . The people call now loudly for a convention in which their voices shall be heard. They have become almost completely united. And now let Tories, submission men and Spanish invaders look out."

Stephen F. Austin now suddenly returned from Mexico, landing at Velasco on September 1. When a thousand Texans honored him at a banquet in Brazoria, they found his voice turned against moderation. Texans, he declared, must unite against any invading force and must organize a government.

When news reached Austin on September 19 that Cós's troops were poised to occupy San Antonio de Bexar, he issued a clarion call to all patriots: "War is our only resource. There is no other remedy but to defend our rights, ourselves, and our country by force of arms."

War was not long in coming. Government troops from San Antonio de Bexar marched seventy miles east to Gonzales to confiscate a rusty six-pounder that the colonists had been given for protection against the Indians. The Gonzales militia, under its thirty-year-old captain, Albert Martin, and a young Tennessee blacksmith, Almeron Dickinson, gathered to block the Mexicans. Numbering but eighteen, they taunted the troops with a little banner on which was emblazoned, "Come and Take It." The Mexicans hesitated and then went into camp.

Artist Frederic Ray's reconstruction, based on contemporary maps and drawings, shows the Alamo as it probably appeared during the siege of February 23–March 6, 1836. Located just east of the town of San Antonio de Bexar, the site had been established as a mission in 1718. Abandoned by the priests late in the eighteenth century, it was later occupied by a garrison of Mexican troops. The compound was enclosed on most sides by nine- to twelve-foot walls, and it encompassed about three acres—too large, its Texan defenders would discover, to hold effectively with their small force.

While the troops dallied, volunteers swelled the ranks of the Gonzales militia to 167 men by October 1. At dawn the next day, the two bands of soldiers faced each other. Somebody fired a shot, and then the little cannon that had caused the confrontation sputtered forth. The Mexicans broke, retreating to Bexar, and the Texas rebellion was underway.

Austin arrived at Gonzales on October 11, and was immediately elected commander of the ragtag Volunteer Army of Texas. The presidio at Goliad soon fell to the rebels, giving them valuable military supplies. Austin led some four hundred men to Bexar and laid siege to that strongly fortified town. Although General Cós had twice as many troops, they were short on food and tormented by low morale. The town was finally assaulted, and after five days of bitter street fighting Cós surrendered on December 11, 1835. He and his men were pa-

roled and allowed to peacefully withdraw from Texas.

Travis had distinguished himself in several scouting expeditions and hit-and-run raids against the Mexicans, but was absent when Bexar was finally assaulted. Austin was also gone, having been sent to the United States to seek aid. By this time a convention had finally gathered in San Felipe and organized a state government for Texas under the Mexican Federalist constitution of 1824—a liberal charter that Santa Anna had overthrown. Henry Smith was elected as provisional governor with a twelve-member council appointed to assist and advise him. Smith and the council immediately set to quarreling, much to the consternation of the newly appointed commander of the Texas army, Maj. General Sam Houston.

After the victory over Cós, the army quickly disintegrated. Military stores left at Bexar by the defeated Mexicans were looted by followers of Dr. James Grant and Colonel Francis Johnson, who proposed a bold strike south into Mexico against Matamoros. Houston bitterly opposed the scheme, but was helpless to stop it. Colonel James Neill, in command at Bexar, gloomily reported that most of his men had joined the Matamoros venture. “We have 104 men and two distinct fortresses to garrison, and about 24 pieces of artillery,” he wrote Governor Smith on January 6, 1836. “You doubtless have learned that we have no provisions nor clothing in this garrison since Johnson and Grant left.”

Governor Smith, in response, ordered Lieutenant Colonel Travis, then on recruiting duty in San Felipe, to reinforce Neill. Travis departed San Felipe on January 23, dragging his feet every step of the way in hope he might be recalled as requested. No recall came, and on February 3 he reported to Colonel Neill in San Antonio de Bexar. Travis was surprised to find Colonel James Bowie with Neill.

There was hardly a man in Texas better known than the forty-year-old Bowie. The big-boned, sandy-haired giant had a personality as forceful and oversized as his physical presence. All across the Old Southwest men recounted his legendary deeds of daring—roping wild mustangs, riding alligators, smuggling slaves with the pirate Lafitte, battling Indians, and searching for the San Saba silver mine. But mostly they spoke of his knife, a monstrous, double-edged blade—and of the men he had slain with it. As his fame spread, men began to ask blacksmiths to make them knives “just like Bowie’s,” and the most peculiarly American of weapons was baptized.

Born in Kentucky in 1796, Bowie had been reared in the Louisiana bayou country. As he grew to strapping manhood he made a local name for himself as a hunter and mustanger. He made a living cutting lumber and barging it down to New Orleans. Soon he felt as comfortable among the courtly citizens of the Crescent City as with the rough folk of the backwoods.

Bowie had first visited Texas in 1819 in company with his brother Rezin. They fell in with Jean Lafitte at his Galveston Island outpost. The old pirate had fallen on

hard times since his glory days operating off Barataria Island, but he still turned a tidy profit smuggling slaves into the United States. The Bowies paid Lafitte a dollar a pound for the blacks, and then made the dangerous journey into Louisiana with their human cargo. Slaves were worth between five hundred and a thousand dollars at auction in those days, and the Bowie brothers did quite well, making over sixty-five thousand dollars before they parted company with Lafitte.

They invested these ill-gotten funds in land speculation. These land deals, many of them rather shady, led Bowie into conflict with Major Norris Wright, a neighbor in Rapides Parish, Louisiana, and set in motion a chain of events culminating in the bloodiest duel in the history of the Old Southwest. On September 19, 1827, the antagonists met at Vidalia Sandbar, a little island on the Mississippi River near Natchez. Neither Bowie nor Wright were principals in the duel to be fought that morning, but when the duelists exchanged ineffectual shots and shook hands, their seconds pulled weapons and a general melee resulted. Two men were killed and three others badly wounded. Bowie, wounded several times, managed to plunge his terrible knife into Major Wright before collapsing from loss of blood.

The sandbar fray made Bowie the most celebrated mankiller on the frontier. There were other fights, always with the knife, and for every real killing there were a dozen fanciful ones. Always Bowie was the victor, and always someone else started the fracas.

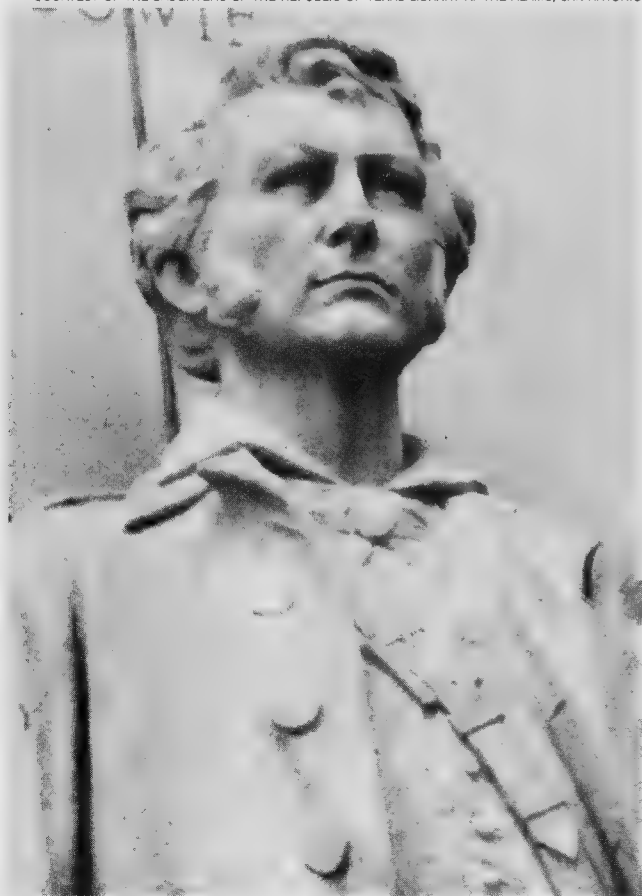
Although he possessed a violent temper, Bowie was generally regarded as courtly and courteous. His deference to women became a trademark. An equally famous American, Henry Clay, shared a stagecoach ride with Bowie in 1832. Clay reported that when a fellow passenger refused to put out his pipe upon a lady’s request, Bowie instantly sprang into action. The ill-mannered traveler suddenly felt the cold steel of Bowie’s knife against his throat and quickly extinguished his smoke amidst profuse apologies to the lady.

In 1828 Bowie again headed for Texas, leaving the states before some fraudulent land speculations he had engaged in in Arkansas with his brother John began to unravel. He passed as a man of wealth and position, and although his notoriety as a knife-fighter had preceded him, he was accepted into the upper circles of Texas society.

Prim and proper Stephen F. Austin immediately disliked Bowie, sizing him up as an extravagant adventurer, but he nevertheless introduced him to Don Juan Martín de Veramendi, vice governor of Texas-Coahuila and the most important Hispanic figure in Texas. His wife, Doña María Josefa Navarro de Veramendi, was from the other major Hispanic family in Texas, and they were the proud parents of a seventeen-year-old girl of uncommon beauty, keen intelligence, and a warm disposition. María Ursula de Veramendi quickly won Jim Bowie’s heart, and within a few months he was baptized into the Roman Catholic Church and took up Mexican citizen-

“The Salvation of Texas depends in great measure on keeping Bexar out of the hands of the enemy . . . we would rather die in these ditches than give it up to the enemy.”

COURTESY OF THE DAUGHTERS OF THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS LIBRARY AT THE ALAMO, SAN ANTONIO



Famous even before the Alamo for his larger-than-life exploits and for giving his name to a deadly knife, forty-year-old Texas Colonel James Bowie at first shared command of the fortress with William Travis. But felled by a debilitating illness, he spent most of the siege on a cot in the barracks, awaiting the approach of death either from his sickness or at the hands of the Mexican attackers.

ship. Bowie and Ursula were married in the San Fernando Church in San Antonio de Bexar on April 25, 1831, and it seemed as if an adventurous life had reached a quiet, domestic conclusion.

But Bowie, although devoted to his wife, could never be still for long. In November he set out across central Texas with his brother Rezin and nine others in search of the legendary lost San Saba silver mine. They never found the mine, but they did encounter over 150 Indians, and there followed one of the most desperate Indian-white clashes in Southwest history. When it was over, one of Bowie's men was dead, and three wounded, while the defeated Indians lost forty dead and another thirty wounded.

Bowie led other parties out against the Indians, eventually ranking as colonel in an early formation of Texas Rangers, and he kept up his search for the silver mines as well. Rumors persisted that he actually found the San Saba mine, which came to be called the Lost Bowie Mine, and that only he knew its true location.

Bowie traveled across Texas, and often back to the United States, making business deals and engaging in wild land speculations, all financed by his father-in-law. Soon he owned over a million acres of prime Texas land.

Then, while on a business trip to Mississippi in 1832, Bowie received the shattering news that cholera had swept Monclova, where the Veramendis kept a summer home. His wife, his two children, and his in-laws were all dead. Bowie's grief was unbearable, and for solace he took more and more to the bottle. He lived alone in the big Veramendi house in Bexar, surrounded by ghosts; a tormented, lonely man. For years he had been wracked by a terrible cough, but now it grew more vicious, exacerbated by his alcoholic binges.

As tensions increased between Mexico and Texas, Bowie threw in with the "war party." Here was a cause a man could lose himself in, a cause that could help him forget the past. Stephen Austin despised Bowie, but Sam Houston was his warm friend and trusted in him completely. "There is no man on whose forecast, prudence, and valor I place a higher estimate," wrote Houston of Bowie. It was Houston who ordered his friend to go to Bexar in January 1836. Houston wanted Bowie to destroy the fortifications at the old Spanish mission called the Alamo, and retreat with Neill's men to Gonzales.

Bowie rode into Bexar on January 19, 1836, with thirty volunteers, and immediately began to reconsider Houston's orders. He liked the fiber of the men with Neill, for they had withstood the blandishments of the Matamoros adventurers; and in the Alamo he saw a fortress worth holding. Mexican friends informed him that Santa Anna was on the march. To Bowie, Bexar now became the key to the defense of Texas. Of course, it was also his home, where his family had lived, and where his many Mexican friends still lived, and he was not about to abandon it to an invading army.

By February 2, Bowie had made a firm commitment to make his stand. "The salvation of Texas depends in great measure on keeping Bexar out of the hands of the

enemy,” he wrote to Governor Smith. “It serves as the frontier picquet [picket] guard, and if it were in the possession of Santa Anna, there is no stronghold from which to repel him in his march toward the Sabine. Colonel Neill and myself have come to the solemn resolution that we will rather die in these ditches than give it up to the enemy.”

The ditches that Bowie was determined to defend were hardly imposing. The mission San Antonio de Valero had been founded by Franciscans in 1718 to Christianize the Indians. Construction had finally been completed during the 1750s. After 1801 the compound was converted into a fort by Spanish troops. Some of the soldiers were from the Company of the Alamo of Parras, Coahuila, and their name stuck to the old mission.

San Antonio de Valero was similar in construction to other Spanish missions in Texas and the Southwest. There was a large rectangular plaza of about three acres, lined by stone walls that were from nine to twelve feet high and up to three feet thick. The main entrance lay on the south side and ran through a single-story building called the low barracks.

A series of adobe dwellings lined the west wall and faced toward Bexar, some four hundred yards distant. The north wall was similar, while the east wall was composed of the two-story “long barracks.” This imposing structure was further fortified by a corral to its rear.

Just south of the long barracks was a ruined Alamo church with four-foot-thick walls, some twenty-two feet high. Its roof had collapsed in the 1760s, but several small rooms along its side wall were still covered.

There was a fifty-yard gap between the church and the low barracks, and Bowie promptly set his engineering officer, Green Jameson, to constructing a low log-and-earthen wall to cover the gap. It would take hundreds of men to hold this sprawling compound, but numbers did not worry Jim Bowie. He had twenty pieces of artillery and a hundred determined men with which to defend the Alamo, and he was confident that others would rally to the defense of Bexar.

The defenders, cheered by the arrival of Travis and his thirty men on February 3, had their spirits further bolstered five days later when Colonel David Crockett and a dozen companions—dubbed the Tennessee Mounted Volunteers—rode into Bexar.

Word of Crockett’s arrival spread quickly, and before long most of the Alamo garrison and many of the citizens of Bexar had gathered around him in the Main Plaza, demanding a speech. Giving speeches was what the fifty-year-old politician did best, and he gave them all a roaring one that day. He had told his Tennessee constituents that if they did not reelect him to Congress they could all go to hell, and he would go to Texas—and here he was at Bexar.

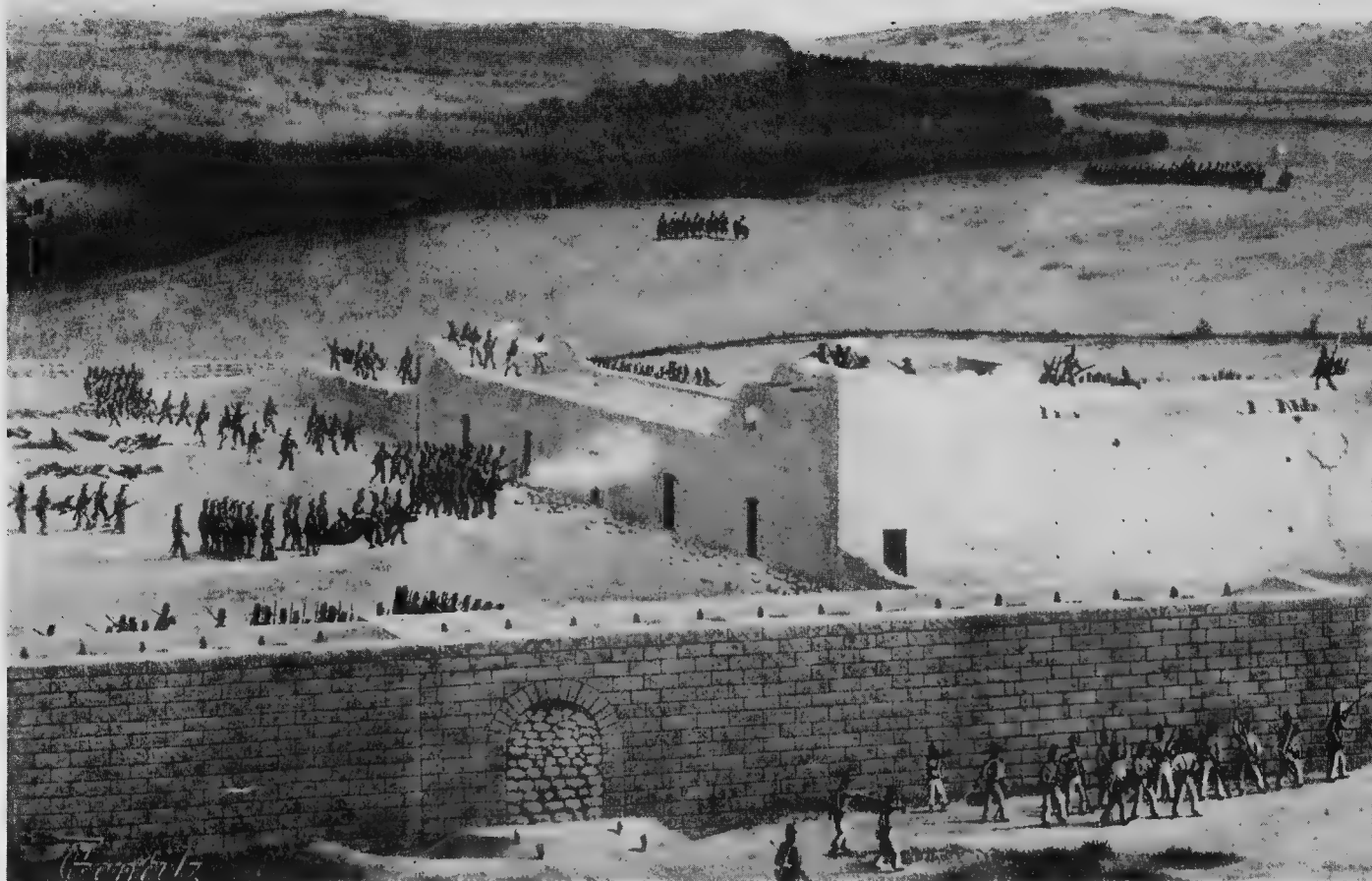
“I have come to aid you all that I can in your noble cause,” he informed the assembled crowd. “I shall iden-

“I have come to aid you all that I can in your noble cause. I shall identify myself with your interests, and all the honor I desire is that of defending as a high private, in common with my fellow citizens, the liberties of our common country.”

COURTESY OF THE DAUGHTERS OF THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS LIBRARY AT THE ALAMO, SAN ANTONIO



Equally famous as Bowie was forty-nine-year-old Alamo defender Davy Crockett, a Tennessee frontiersman of legendary proportions and a two-term member of Congress. Although “happily innocent of learning and with little understanding of public questions”—in the words of one historian—Crockett was a gifted orator and humorist, and a brave soldier. He would be one of the last to fall at the Alamo.



Based on extensive research, this 1885 painting by Texas artist Theodore Gentilz depicts the final Mexican assault on the Alamo with considerable accuracy. The south wall of the compound is in the foreground, the ruins of the old church at right.

tify myself with your interests, and all the honor I desire is that of defending as a high private, in common with my fellow citizens, the liberties of our common country." Old Davy Crockett had not become one of the most celebrated men in America for nothing. It was a fine speech, and it established him immediately as a natural, democratic leader of the Bexar garrison.

Crockett, like Houston, Travis, and Bowie, had come to Texas to start over. Born in northeastern Tennessee on August 17, 1786, Davy had grown up on the frontier as his father, John Crockett, a veteran of the American Revolution, moved ever westward in search of elusive fortune. Davy ran away from home at age twelve to avoid a thrashing and worked for several years as a wagoneer. He eventually returned home and even went to school for six months before taking a wife, lovely Polly Finley, in August 1806.

The Crocketts settled in central Tennessee, near the Alabama border, but their efforts at farming were interrupted by the outbreak of the Creek Indian War in 1813. Davy promptly volunteered to fight, and served in Andrew Jackson's successful campaign against the Indians.

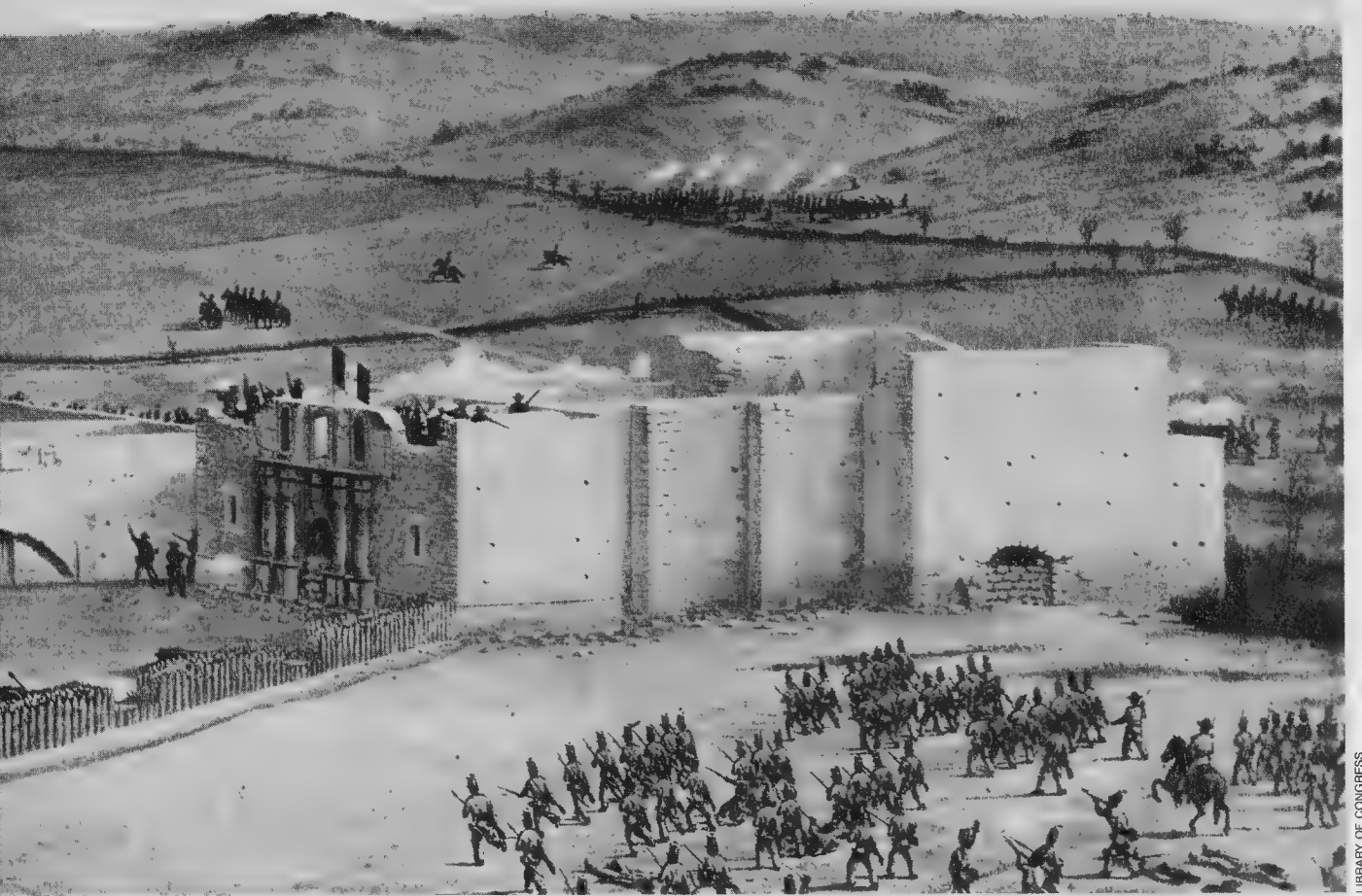
Soon after Crockett returned from the war, his wife died, leaving him with three children. He soon married Elizabeth Patton, a widow with two small children, and

they combined their families, eventually adding three more children of their own to the brood.

Crockett did not prosper as a farmer. In search of better land he moved his growing family west of the Tennessee River, to lands recently wrested from the Creeks. It was there that Crockett began his political career, first as a magistrate, then as a colonel of militia, and finally, in 1821, as a delegate to the state legislature. He was a forceful stump speaker, winning over the voters with tall tales and humorous anecdotes. Although of independent mind, he was strongly identified with the Jackson forces, and as a result was elected to Congress in 1827. He championed Jacksonian democracy and squatter's rights, and became a picturesque and celebrated figure in Washington.

Crockett eventually broke with Jackson over land and Indian policy, and briefly aligned himself with the Whigs. They exploited his backwoods credentials and attempted to build him up into a Whig frontier symbol to counter Jackson, but the effort failed. He lost his bid for reelection in 1835 by 230 votes. His Whig friends promptly abandoned him, and his political career lay in shambles. So Davy Crockett, as he had done countless times before, packed up and headed westward to regain his fortunes. This time he headed for Texas, giving speeches all along the way.

On February 10 a grand fandango was thrown in Crockett's honor by the Alamo garrison. The drinking and dancing was still going strong after midnight when a scout hurried in with the news that Santa



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Anna had reached the Rio Grande, only one hundred and fifty miles to the southwest. A hurried officer's call followed, but after a quick meeting everyone returned to the party convinced that the Mexicans were still far away. Colonel Neill, however, was having second thoughts about holding Bexar, and the next morning he departed on "twenty-days' leave." Before leaving, Neill appointed Travis, the senior regular army officer in Bexar, to take over command of the Alamo.

This did not please the volunteers. They demanded an election to decide who their commander would be, to which Travis reluctantly agreed. Jim Bowie was overwhelmingly elected to command the volunteers, and the humiliated Travis, who still commanded the few regulars, retreated to his rooms to brood. He took up his pen and bitterly complained to Governor Smith that his situation was "truly awkward and delicate." Since Bowie's election, Travis priggishly noted, "He has been roaring drunk all the time; has assumed all command—is proceeding in a most disorderly and irregular manner—interfering with private property, releasing prisoners sentenced by court martial and by Civil Court and turning everything topsy-turvy. If I did not feel my honor and that of my country compromised I would leave here instantly for some other point with the troops under my immediate command as I am unwilling to be responsible for the drunken irregularities of any man."

By February 14, however, Bowie had sobered up, and he and Travis reached agreement to share the command, making all decisions jointly.

While Travis and Bowie bickered, and their soldiers

occasionally labored at fortifying the Alamo, the Mexican army struggled on toward Bexar. Santa Anna commanded the army, reinforced at Saltillo by Cós's retreating soldiers and on the Rio Grande by 1,541 men under General Ramirez y Sesma. This force, some 5,500 strong with twenty cannons, crossed the Great River on February 16, 1836.

The march from Saltillo to Bexar, some 365 miles, was a hard one, marked both by a ghastly blizzard and long, dusty miles of dry desert. Many of the soldiers, including both the polished, professional *Zapadores* (fighting engineers) and the illiterate Mayan Indians of the Yucatan battalion, were felled along the trail by exposure or disease. The general had not bothered to bring along a single doctor for his men, nor even a priest to administer last rites. Nevertheless, the Mexican advance guard was within striking distance of Bexar by February 21, and only a rain-swollen river prevented them from launching a surprise attack on the town.

When Lieutenant Colonel Travis awoke on February 23, he found Bexar a scene of wild commotion. The citizens of the town were in motion, with every wagon and cart pressed into service to take them out of town. Travis had been receiving warnings for days that the enemy host was near, but he had not believed the reports. Now, however, he was finally becoming a believer; he hurried to place a sentinel high in the tower of the imposing San Fernando Church.

Hours of fretful worry passed, and then suddenly the bell of the church rang out over and over. The enemy was



in view, claimed the agitated sentry, but no one else could see anything. Two volunteers, Dr. John Sutherland and John W. Smith, rode out of town to have a closer look. They had not gone far before they came upon the Mexican cavalry. Back toward Bexar they galloped. In the church tower the vindicated sentry saw them coming and once again jerked on the bell rope.

The defenders of the Alamo gathered together their possessions and hurried toward the old mission. Some had families to look after. Jim Bowie rushed to the Veramendi house to gather in his two young sisters-in-law, while Almeron Dickinson, the Gonzales blacksmith who now commanded the Alamo's artillery, galloped to his

quarters to get his eighteen-year-old wife, Susannah, and infant daughter. "Give me the baby," he cried. "Jump on behind and ask me no questions!" Soon they were within the protective walls of the Alamo.

Travis, in his headquarters in the mission, scratched out messages requesting reinforcements. As he sent Dr. Sutherland off to Gonzales with one appeal, Davy Crockett reported to him. "Colonel, here am I," declared the old frontiersman. "Assign me to a position, and I and my twelve boys will try to defend it." Travis assigned him to the rough palisade between the church and low barracks, the weakest point in the fort.

Within two hours Santa Anna arrived in nearly aban-



DETAIL OF THE ORIGINAL. COURTESY OF CONTINENTAL INSURANCE, NEW YORK CITY

Like many other Alamo paintings, this heroic canvas by Frederick C. Yohn focuses on the last desperate stand made by Davy Crockett and a few companions.

doned Bexar with a strong force, although much of his army was still strung out all the way back to the Rio Grande. As the Mexican band played, a blood-red flag fluttered in the breeze over the San Fernando church, a symbol of no quarter to the enemy.

Emissaries now ushered out of the Alamo under flags of truce. Green Jameson went first at the instigation of Bowie, to be followed a few minutes later by Captain Albert Martin, the hero of Gonzales, sent out by Travis.

Both men received the same response from the Mexicans—a demand for unconditional surrender. Travis sent a simple and unmistakably clear answer with a blast from the Alamo's eighteen-pounder.

It was dawn on the twenty-fourth before the Mexican artillery responded. From the partial cover of the riverbank, some four hundred yards from the Alamo, two nine-pounders and a small howitzer bombarded the fort the rest of the day. But the shells caused little damage, and none of the defenders were injured. There was, however, one great loss to the garrison that day. Bowie's strange and terrible illness had been growing worse for

*** Among the prisoners was a man “of great stature . . . in whose face was the imprint of adversity, but in whom one also noticed a degree of resignation and nobility that did him honor.”**

FROM "THE ADVENTURES OF DAVY CROCKETT" (1934); COPYRIGHT 1934 BY CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS, COPYRIGHT RENEWED 1962 BY LEDA B. THOMASON. REPRODUCED WITH THE PERMISSION OF CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS



Although not all students of the Alamo agree, evidence suggests that Davy Crockett (depicted above) was one of a small group of defenders taken captive at battle's end—only to be cut down without mercy on General Santa Anna's direct order.

weeks, and now he completely collapsed. Unable to even stand, he relinquished his share of the command to Travis.

They placed Bowie in a room in the low barracks. He waited in the cool, dimly lit room, often in and out of delirium, wracked by coughing fits, for the inevitable arrival of death. Bowie had faced death many times before and it held no fear for him now. It had already claimed those most dear to him, and he must have welcomed this final confrontation. But Jim Bowie would not go quietly. The great blade lay on a table beside his bed: he was ready for his final duel.

As darkness approached, Travis was also alone with his thoughts in the Alamo's headquarters, just a few yards from Bowie's room. His eloquent pen dashed out another appeal for assistance, this one addressed "To the People of Texas & All Americans in the World":

Fellow citizens & compatriots—I am besieged, by a thousand or more of the Mexicans under Santa Anna—I have sustained a continual bombardment & cannonade for 24 hours & have not lost a man—The enemy has demanded a surrender at discretion, otherwise, the garrison are to be put to the sword, if the fort is taken—I have answered the demand with a cannon shot, & our flag still waves proudly from the walls—I shall never surrender or retreat. Then, I call on you in the name of Liberty, of patriotism & everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid, with all dispatch—The enemy is receiving reinforcements daily & will no doubt increase to three or four thousand in four or five days. If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible & die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his honor & that of his country—Victory or Death.

Travis underlined those last three words three times. Then he handed the message to Captain Albert Martin, with instructions to carry it the sixty-five miles to Gonzales. After dark Martin raced out of the south gate and then turned east. "Hurry on all the men you can," the captain scribbled on the back of Travis's letter when he reached Gonzales late on the twenty-fifth. Another messenger galloped on to San Felipe, another eighty-five miles to the northeast, with the letter. From there other men carried Travis's words to the various American settlements in Texas, and then across the Sabine and Red rivers into the United States.

February 25 was a day of sharp combat at the Alamo. Santa Anna sent elements of the Matamoros and Jiménez battalions against the fort, at midmorning, only to have them stopped short by Captain Dickinson's artillery. A small band of Texans then sallied forth and burned some nearby huts that had provided cover to the attackers. Again the Texans suffered no casualties, while the Mexicans did not fare nearly so well. Still, Santa Anna pulled his ring of soldiers even tighter around the Alamo, racing new batteries south and southeast of the fort.

That evening Travis dashed off a report of the day's

fighting—lavishly praising Dickinson, Crockett, and others for gallantry in repelling the Mexican attack—and again appealing for assistance. He reluctantly agreed that Juan Seguín should make the dangerous ride through the encircling Mexicans to carry the letter to Sam Houston. Travis hated to lose Seguín, who commanded a company of Tejanos, or Mexican-Texans, for he could prove invaluable in any future negotiations with Santa Anna.

Seguín hurried to Jim Bowie's room to ask for the use of his fine horse. Bowie, so wracked by fever that he barely recognized his old friend, muttered his assent. Then Seguín, accompanied by his orderly, dashed out of the Alamo, past a squad of surprised Mexican dragoons, and vanished into the darkness.

Scion of a wealthy and influential Hispanic family, Seguín had long been a friend to the American settlers in Texas. His liberal sensibilities bridled at the centralist dictatorship of Santa Anna. His father, Erasmo, was a warm friend of both Austin and Bowie, and had been elected as a delegate to the convention that ultimately declared Texas independence on March 2, 1836. In the early days of the war, Seguín's company of Tejano cavalry had proven invaluable as scouts. Seguín, who held the rank of captain in the Texas army, had scouted with Travis to insure that General Cós's defeated army withdrew from Texas late in 1835 and then had accompanied Travis to the Alamo.

After delivering his message, Seguín raised another company of Tejanos, some twenty-five in number, and hurried back toward the Alamo. Word reached him that Colonel James Fannin was now marching toward the Alamo with three hundred men, so he halted at Cibola to await this larger force. Day after day passed as the impatient Tejano captain looked in vain for Fannin's men, well knowing that time was running out.

Fannin, timid and unsure of his own ability to command, had lost his nerve. He had started for the Alamo on February 26, with over three hundred men and four cannons. But while still in sight of the fort at Goliad, ninety miles southeast of Bexar, several of the wagons had broken down. The expedition soon became a tragic comedy of errors, with oxen wandering off while the wagons were being repaired. Fannin held a council of war, and decided to return to Goliad. He had abandoned the Alamo. A month later, on March 27, 1836, he would surrender his own force to the Mexicans and be murdered along with over three hundred of his men, on orders of Santa Anna.

The men of Gonzales, however, were made of sterner stuff. There George Kimball, a former New York hatter, was organizing a company of militia to march to the relief of the Alamo. By February 27 Kimball had assembled his men, and they set out for Bexar, guided by two of Travis's messengers, Albert Martin and John W. Smith. Skirting Mexican patrols in the darkness, they dashed safely into the fort at 3 P.M. on March 1. These thirty-two gallant men would prove to be the only reinforcements the Alamo would receive.

In their rage the Mexicans tossed Bowie on their bayonets like so much hay.

FROM McCLURE'S MAGAZINE, JANUARY 1902; COURTESY OF THE FONDREN LIBRARY, SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY



Too weak to leave his cot in the low barracks, Jim Bowie died during the battle's last minutes. According to his sister-in-law (an Alamo survivor), Mexican soldiers "tossed Bowie's body on their bayonets until his blood covered their clothes and dyed them red."

But Travis was still optimistic that relief would be sent, and the arrival of the men from Gonzales further buoyed his spirits. Fannin would surely come to his aid, and to insure that, he had sent out his most trusted and influential officer, James Butler Bonham.

Like Travis, Bonham was a South Carolina lawyer of soaring ambition and romantic sensibilities. Ironically, he had been born just a few miles from the Travis homestead, in 1807. But Bonham's family was aristocratic, and it is unlikely that the two boys knew each other. Bonham, always looking for a fight, had been expelled from South Carolina College before manning an artillery battery as a young colonel during the state's Nullification Crisis of 1832. A failed romance had brought him west. When he learned of the Texas war he helped to raise a company of Alabama volunteers—the Mobile Greys—reaching Bexar on December 12, 1835. Bonham was commissioned a lieutenant in the cavalry, and quickly won the admiration of Houston, Bowie, Travis, and almost everyone who came in contact with him. "His influence in the army is great," Houston noted, "more so than some who would be generals."

Bonham reached Goliad on February 29, but all his powers of influence were wasted on Fannin. The colonel would not budge, and he urged Bonham to remain with him. But Bonham quickly rode on to Gonzales in search of volunteers. He found the town empty, for Kimball's men had already left for the Alamo.

Bonham learned that Seguín's company was still at Cibola, now reinforced by a dozen men under Dr. John Sutherland, and he presumed that they would soon leave for Bexar as well. At Gonzales Bonham met another of Travis's messengers, young Ben Highsmith, who had just returned from a futile attempt to get back through Santa Anna's lines. Weary and nervous after having been chased several miles by the Mexican cavalry, Highsmith warned Bonham that no one could get into the Alamo. "I will report the result of my mission to Travis or die in the attempt," responded Bonham. On March 3 he galloped past startled Mexicans and into the Alamo to report to his commander that Fannin was not coming.

Bonham's gloomy report was punctuated by the arrival of more of Santa Anna's army and the movement of Mexican artillery batteries to within 250 yards of the Alamo. The continual bombardment was beginning to wear down the walls. That night Travis again busied himself writing appeals for assistance. The ever-reliable John W. Smith was to venture forth once more to rally men to reinforce the fort.

Others hurriedly scribbled notes to their families for Smith to carry out. Isaac Millsaps's poignant letter to his blind wife and seven children in Gonzales is probably typical of those final messages:

We are in the fortress of the Alamo a ruined church that has most fell down. The Mexicans are here in large numbers they have kept up a constant fire since we got here. All of our boys [the Gonzales militia] are well and Capt. Martin is in good spirits . . . Col. Bowie is down sick and had to be to bed. I saw him yesterday and he is still ready

to fight. He didn't know me from last spring but did remember Wash. He tells all that help will be here soon and it makes us feel good . . . I have not seen Travis but 2 times since here. He told us all this morning that Fanning was going to be here early with many men and there would be a good fight. He stays on the wall some but mostly to his room. I hope help comes soon cause we can't fight them all . . . If we fail here get to the river with the children. All Texas will be before the enemy. We get so little news here we know nothing. There is no discontent in our boys—some are tired from loss of sleep and rest. The Mexicans are shooting every few minutes, but most of the shots fall inside and do no harm. I don't know what else to say they is calling for all letters, kiss the dear children for me and believe as I do that all will be well and God protects us all. . . .

Even the duty-bound Travis took a minute to write a personal note to his friend who was boarding his son, Charles. "Take care of my little boy," Travis wrote on a sheet of yellow wrapping paper. "If the country should be saved, I may make him a splendid fortune; but if the country should be lost and I should perish, he will have nothing but the proud recollection that he is the son of a man who died for his country."

Smith gathered together his precious cargo—the last messages of the doomed garrison—and mounted his horse. It was near midnight when a party of Texan skirmishers made their way out of the Alamo and fired into the sleeping Mexicans. In the confusion that followed, Smith galloped out of the fort and into the safety of the darkness beyond.

What optimism remained among the garrison rapidly faded over the next two days as the intensity of the bombardment increased, and as the Mexican cannon moved ever closer to the crumbling walls of the old mission. Even the normally ebullient Crockett grew weary, confessing to Susannah Dickinson that he preferred to "march out and die in the open air. I don't like to be hemmed up." From his post Crockett could see the Mexicans building scaling ladders. He would not have long to wait.

On Saturday afternoon, March 5, there was a lull in the bombardment, and Travis took advantage of the respite to call his men together in the Alamo plaza. Calmly facing them, he broke the news that Fannin was not coming. The Alamo was doomed. Although there was no longer any hope of victory, he was determined to stay in the fort and sell his life as dearly as possible to buy more time for Texas. Travis asked the men to join him, but left to each that ultimate decision. Anyone who wished to leave was free to go.

It was a moment of sublime democratic choice as, one by one, each man made his decision to die for liberty rather than submit to tyranny. Only one member of the garrison was not prepared to die: after dark Frenchman Louis "Moses" Rose, a friend of Bowie's, climbed over the wall and vanished into the oblivion beyond.

Continued on page 35



NOVA SCOTIA



Fortress Louisbourg Cape Breton

Explore a nation's heritage



The CHESAPEAKE



Captain James Lawrence

vs. the SHANNON

by Robert Grant

The United States and the Canadian maritime province of Nova Scotia have a long history of close and friendly relations, which is one reason why Americans feel so much at home when they visit this beautiful region. Proximity, a similarity of the origins of the settlers of the province and the original American thirteen colonies (especially New England), and commerce all contribute to the amicable ties that bind the two areas.

Yet, as with any long-time friendship, there have been rocky patches, and these contribute some of the most interesting interludes in this ongoing relationship. One such was the battle between two frigates, the American *Chesapeake* and the British *Shannon* during the War of 1812, a fracas that eventually provided inspiration of different sorts to both sides.

The United States Government, viewing many of Great Britain's naval practices during its fight for life during the long Napoleonic wars as intolerable interference in America's right to free maritime commerce, declared war on June 18, 1812. When this happened, Nova Scotia was bound to become involved since its capital, Halifax, with its



Sir Philip Vere Broke



Shortly after the engagement between the Shannon and the Chesapeake, the English artist J. C. Schetky painted a series of four pictures of the battle that are now in the collection of the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, Halifax. Here, the artist portrayed the opening salvo between the two ships.



Schetky's final painting in the series depicted the *Shannon* leading a remarkably unscathed *Chesapeake* into Halifax harbor after the battle.

superb deep-water harbor, was the headquarters of the British Navy's North American Squadron. Many Nova Scotians sailed on the British ships, and several British sailors had established families in the Canadian province.

At first, it seemed that the Americans would only score points for unparalleled audacity. The British Navy boasted nearly a thousand ships including 124 ships-of-the-line and 116 frigates. In Halifax alone, the British had one ship-of-the-line and seven frigates plus many smaller ships. Against this imposing force, the Americans fielded a grand total of 16 fighting ships: three large frigates, the *United States*, the *President*, and the *Constitution*; a scaled-down version of these, the *Chesapeake*; four smaller frigates; four sloops, and four little brigs.

Nevertheless, the Americans opened the naval actions with a series of victories that astonished, embarrassed, and chagrined their mighty foes. Chief among these was when the *Constitution* earned her nickname of "Old Ironsides" by defeating the British frigate *Guerrière* near Halifax. That an American ship should sink one of their frigates in a ship-to-ship combat was especially galling to the British and Nova Scotians.

So both sides had much riding on the outcome of the battle between the *Shannon* and the *Chesapeake* besides its effect on the progress of the war in general. The British were anxious to reverse

this series of unexpected and humiliating defeats and reassert the naval superiority to which the country had become accustomed. The Americans, buoyed by their initial successes, needed to keep their chain of victories intact to sustain the soaring morale of the country in this David-vs.-Goliath conflict.

And the Americans had every reason to anticipate another victory. The *Chesapeake* was one of the strongest ships in the American navy—one of a new type of superfrigate developed by American ship builders—and very fast. And she was commanded by a hero much admired by his fellow countrymen—Captain James Lawrence.

Born in 1781, Lawrence began his naval career and won distinction in several engagements during the United States' wars with the Barbary Coast pirates. When war broke out with Great Britain, he was given command initially of the sloop *Hornet*. In its first voyage of 145 days under Lawrence's command, the *Hornet* captured one ship, two brigs, one schooner, and one man of war. When she returned to the New York Navy Yard in March, 1813, and reported these successes, Lawrence became the man of the hour.

Yet Lawrence was an extremely ambitious and proud man whose prickly sense of honor had gotten him into many a verbal fracas with his superiors during his career. His quick temper and reaction to real and imagined slights

had brought him once to the point of resigning from the Navy. Now, he felt, his record entitled him to command nothing less than the *Constitution*; his superiors agreed that a promotion was in order but the *Constitution* already had a captain. So Lawrence was assigned to the *Chesapeake*, and was once again disappointed in his ambition.

The *Chesapeake* was in Boston harbor being refitted, and when Lawrence arrived on May 18 with orders to sail as soon as possible, he found a ship that was far from ready. The crew was a poorly trained, pick-up group, who were far more at home among the pleasures of the port than the rigors of the sea, and the process of resupplying the ship had not been completed. Lawrence threw himself into the work of readying the ship with a minimum of delay.

Meanwhile, outside the harbor, the *Shannon* was approaching under the command of Sir Philip Vere Broke. Broke, who lacked the connections that would have advanced his career under the patronage system operating in the British navy, had missed much of the glorious action that distinguished the British navy during the Napoleonic wars. However, when he finally received a command, he served with distinction, and was given command of the *Shannon*.

Anticipating war with the United States, the British assigned the *Shannon* to duty out of Halifax, where she first arrived in September 1811. Since that time, the ship had been almost continuously at sea on convoy duty, and Broke missed no opportunity for training sessions with his crew to keep them in top shape.

The initial British defeats at the hands of the Americans had caused an increasing fire of criticism of British naval practices and procedures, both in London and Halifax (many of the sailors aboard the *Guerrière*, for instance, were Nova Scotians.) While Broke did not entirely exonerate his own service (his constant training sessions aboard his own ship were partly a reaction to his belief that other commanders were slack in this regard, which contributed to their defeats), he was sure that much of the criticism was due to overreaction. It would be stilled, he felt, if a British ship could capture one of the large American frigates. This he proposed to do.

His quarry was the *Constitution* (both because of its fame and to avenge the loss of the *Guerrière*), but when he took up his position off Boston, the *Constitution* had sailed. The *Chesapeake* was just

NOVA SCOTIA



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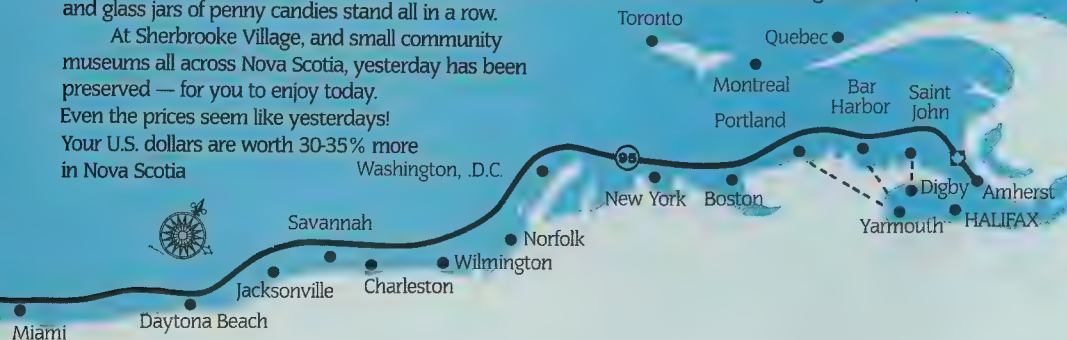
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as inviting, and Lawrence was ready to sail.

Broke knew something of both the *Chesapeake* and her captain. Aware that the *Chesapeake* was probably faster and more maneuverable than the *Shannon*, he decided to challenge the *Chesapeake* to a direct ship-to-ship cannon duel. He felt that his finely honed crew might give him an edge in such a confrontation; moreover, he was sure that it was the kind of bold dare that the proud Lawrence would not refuse. He was right in both cases.

As the *Chesapeake* approached the *Shannon* on June 1, 1813, Lawrence realized that the British ship was dead in the water and read the challenge correctly. He cut back his sails (sacrificing the *Chesapeake's* advantage of speed) and had the ship prepared for the direct duel. In the first salvo, the *Shannon's* fire was deadly, raking the command deck and killing most of the *Chesapeake's* officers. Lawrence himself was mortally wounded. The battle was over in 13 minutes with a complete defeat for the *Chesapeake*. Yet this debacle was the origin of one of the United States' most inspirational mottos. It was Lawrence who, as he lay dying, repeatedly urged his crew: "Don't give up the ship."

When the *Shannon* towed its prize into Halifax harbor on June 6, it set off wild celebrations in the town. The victory, as Broke had hoped, did much to still criticism, and restore British confidence in the power of its navy, and buoy the sense of national pride.

To the Americans, the defeat of the *Chesapeake* was as devastating as it was uplifting to the British. Yet this base of ashes provided a firm foundation for another national tradition. Although naval historians came to view Lawrence's actions as foolhardy and indefensible, at the time the Americans glorified him for going all out for the enemy. And his exhortation provided a rallying cry that still lives.

The tradition quickly took root. It was only three months later, on September 10, 1813, that Oliver Hazard Perry met the enemy victoriously on Lake Erie. His flagship was named the *Lawrence* and flying from its mainmast was a flag reading "Don't Give Up The Ship."

The story of the *Chesapeake* and the *Shannon* is only one of many episodes showing how closely intertwined are the histories of the United States and Nova Scotia. And, as this tale demonstrates, it is a long relationship that has been mutually beneficial—even in adversity.

Nova Scotia has a busy year-round calendar of shows, markets, exhibits, festivals, suppers, and other special events that will be as interesting and entertaining to the visitor as they are to the residents. Here are some of the highlights of the 1986 schedule, but be sure to check local papers and tourist bureaus for other events during your stay. The Nova Scotia Tourism office operates toll-free telephone lines that will fill you in on dates and times of special events (in addition to other information including weather, reservation services, and other travel assistance). In the continental U.S.A. (except Maine), call 1-800-341-6096; in Maine, call 1-800-492-0643.

May 29-June 2

54th Annapolis Valley Apple Blossom Festival
A major festival featuring sports events, musical events, band concerts, parades, barbecues and crowning of Queen Annapolis.

Annapolis Valley

May 31

Annual Kermesse Bazaar
Sponsored by the Auxiliary of the IWK Hospital. 75th anniversary features midway, clowns, magic shows, art gallery, etc. 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Halifax

Mar. 10-Sept. 30

Nova Scotia Designer Crafts Council Permanent Collection

Halifax

June-December

Yarmouth's 225th Birthday Celebrations

Yarmouth

June 14-Sept. 13

King's Festival '86
A series of four-stage productions including comedy, drama and musicals—the third largest live Theatre Festival in the Atlantic Provinces. Every Saturday, Tuesday and Thursday—8:30 p.m.

Annapolis Royal

June 19-22

Joe Howe—Halifax Festival Community festival with

Halifax

Harbour boat races, treasure hunt, parade, dances, musical entertainment, midnight picnic, dinner dance, fireworks.

June 20-22

Celebration '86
International folkdancing, music, food and exhibits, presented by the Multicultural Association of Nova Scotia.

Halifax-Dartmouth

June 25-July 1

Bedford Days
Historical background of Bedford, plus pageant, barbecue, sporting events, beerfest, etc.

Bedford

June 27-29

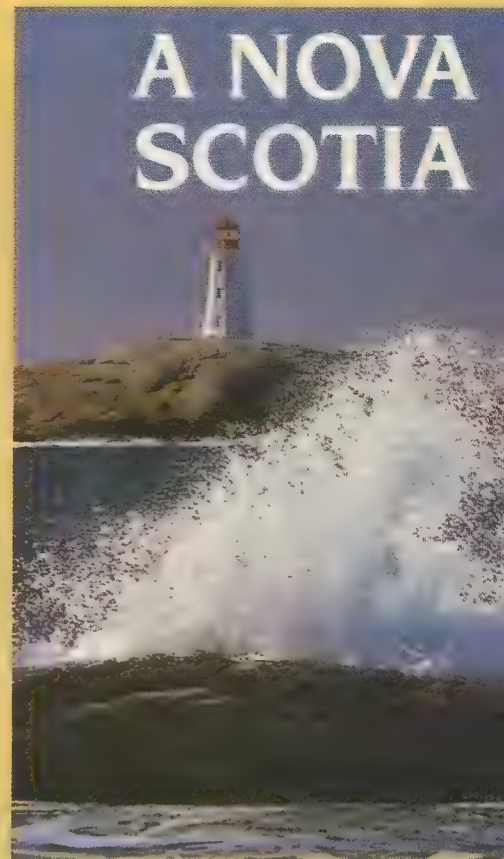
Queens County Privateer Days
10th Anniversary celebration includes queen's pageant, dances, stage productions, food concessions, bingo, beer gardens, children's entertainment and other activities.

Liverpool

July 4

July 4th American Visitors Party
Welcome party for American visitors on their National Day. Refreshments and entertainment. Open to the public.

Bridgetown



SUMMER



July 8-13

Festival Acadien de Clare
Gabriel and Evangeline
pageant, deep-sea fishing
tournament, children's
sports day, Acadian
dances, golf tournament,
street parade, bazaar,
lumber jack contest, barrel
rolling contest, French
mass.

Clare

July 10-12

Antigonish Highland
Games
Major Scottish festival—
pipe bands, Highland
dancing, traditional
Scottish athletic events,
concerts, massed pipe
band tattoo.

Antigonish

July 10-13

Pictou Lobster Fisheries
Carnival
Events include lobster
boat races, sailboat races,
waterfront activities,
lobster suppers, local en-
tertainment, outdoor
concerts, parades,
pageants.

Pictou

July 12-13

Lunenburg Craft Festival
N.S. crafts, pancake
breakfast, chowder lunch,
soap box derby, scallop
fry, beer garden, chicken
barbeque. Evening concert.

Lunenburg

July 20

Big Pond Concert
Outdoor concert featuring
the best in Cape Breton
traditional music, fiddling,
piping, piano playing,
Gaelic and English singing,
step dancing and Highland
dancing.

Big Pond

August 1-10

Blueberry Harvest Festival
A local event consisting of
blueberry suppers, teas
and breakfasts with
sporting events, car rally,
craft sale, pageant, beer
gardens and parade.

Amherst

August 2-4

Annapolis Royal Craft &
Antique Show
Largest craft and antique
summer in western Nova
Scotia. More than 80
exhibitors from across
Nova Scotia.

Annapolis Royal

August 7-10

Sam Slick Days
Celebration of the
recognition of Sam Slick as
the fictitious ambassador
linking N.S. with the New
England States. Street
parade, pancake breakfast,
children's activities, garden
party, beer garden,
sporting events.

Windsor

August 13-16

Halifax County Exhibition
Agricultural exhibition with
street parade, displays,
light and heavy horse
classes, poultry and
livestock and ox and horse
pulls. Variety of entertain-
ment daily.

Middle Musquodoboit

August 15-16

Downeast Old Time
Fiddling Contest
Fiddlers from Atlantic
Provinces compete in four
classes: open class, 60
years and over, 16 years
and under and Scottish
class. Additional special
entertainment.

Lower Sackville

August 25

Feast of St. Louis
The Fortress of Louisbourg
takes on a military air as it
stages special events to
honor Louis IX, patron
saint of the military.

Louisbourg

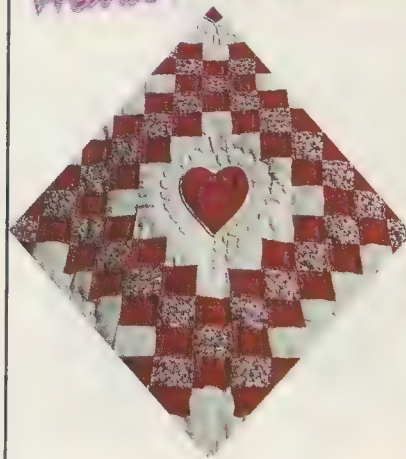
September 17-20

Nova Scotia Fisheries
Exhibition
Promotion of the fishing
industry and its allied
industries along with com-
petitive events, entertain-
ment and midway.

Lunenburg

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Continued from page 26

Later during that same night, after eleven days of almost continual bombardment, the Mexican artillery stopped firing. The unaccustomed silence soon lulled the weary defenders of the Alamo into sleep. Not so in the Mexican camp. All night officers and men busied themselves in preparation for assaulting the fort. Santa Anna, as usual, had carefully planned every detail of the attack. For the assault he relied on his veteran troops, with some 1,100 actually to be engaged. General Cós was to attack from the northwest with 350 men. Colonel Francisco Duque would lead 350 more in from the northeast. From the east, Colonel José María Romero was to advance with 300 soldiers, while Colonel Juan Morales would assault Crockett's position at the southern stockade wall with 100 men.

General Sesma's cavalry would be strung out east of the Alamo to prevent any escape, as well as to keep an eye out for Texan reinforcements. In reserve, under his personal command, Santa Anna kept the crack *Zapadores* and the infantry grenadiers.

By four in the morning on Sunday, March 6, the Mexican troops were in position. They shivered on the cold ground, denied even the comfort of moonlight, for the clouds were thick. Santa Anna seemed caught in indecision, failing to give the order to attack. For an hour the soldiers fidgeted in cruel anticipation, their cold hands grasped tight around old surplus British muskets. Finally a soldier could contain himself no longer. "Viva Santa Anna!" went up the cry, which quickly grew into a chorus of hundreds of voices. The decision made for him, Santa Anna signaled his bugler to sound the call for attack. As one, the columns rushed toward the Alamo.

Travis, instantly awake, grabbed his sword and a shotgun, and rushed from his room followed by his slave, Joe. The Alamo was alive with running men as the shouts of the Mexicans and blaring bugles rent the air. "Come on boys," Travis shouted. "The Mexicans are upon us and we'll give them hell!"

Waving his men to the walls, Travis saw several of Captain Seguin's Tejanos and called out to them in Spanish, "¡No rendirse, muchachos!" ["Don't surrender, comrades!"] Hurrying to his post at the twelve-pounder on the northwest wall, he could see in the dim light that the enemy was already dangerously close. Now the field was sporadically illuminated by fiery blasts from the Texan cannon and spits of flame from American long rifles and Mexican muskets.

The Texan artillery did terrible work as grapeshot raked the advancing ranks. Forty men fell around one soldier in an instant. Colonel Duque was wounded, and then trampled to death by his own advancing troops. The columns wavered, broke, and retreated, only to be reformed and sent in again. Once more the carnage was terrible as long rifles and cannons extracted their heavy price from the attackers. Again the Mexicans fell back.

Incredibly, the decimated Mexican columns regrouped

and plunged once again into the storm of fire. High courage was the rule on both sides that bloody morning. Romero's column was again stopped at the east wall, but instead of retreating, veered off to the north, mingling with Duque's column, now commanded by General Manuel Fernandez Castrillón. Cós's column, mauled by Travis's twelve-pounder on the northwest wall, drifted to the east, joining the mass of soldiers surging against the center of the north wall.

Santa Anna was infuriated. Everything was going wrong. He angrily ordered in the four hundred reserves. Cheering and firing their *escopetas* [muskets], the hardened *Zapadores* and the tough grenadiers rushed into the fray. Now, above the cacophony of explosions, gunfire, and screaming men rose a new and terrible sound. Santa Anna had ordered the massed bands of all the battalions to play the "Degüello"—the ancient Spanish cutthroat song of no quarter.

Milling soldiers bunched up against the north wall, pressed by those behind who sought the relative shelter the wall provided from the Texan cannon. The scaling ladders had long since been lost, and now men climbed onto each other's backs and grasped chinks in the rough wall—hard climbing, but not impossible for desperate men. As they clambered over the top of the wall they were met with Bowie knives and clubbed rifles—but the Texans were stretched too thin, and soon Mexicans began spilling into the compound.

Travis, his cannon now useless against the Mexicans bunched directly below him, fired his shotgun into the swirling mass of soldiers. Then, as Joe watched in horror, his master suddenly spun around and tumbled down the parapet, a single bullet wound in his head. Stunned and dying, he sat up against the sloping ramp. Mexicans were quickly upon him, but as an officer approached, the wounded man summoned a last reserve of defiant strength and drove his sword into him. They died together.

The Texans began to fall back from the wall, firing as they retreated toward the long barracks. Mexicans now poured over the north wall, unchecked by defenders. On the west wall Texans turned their cannons around to fire into the plaza at the advancing enemy. The attackers were mowed down, but for every man who fell ten others took his place.

Morales's column, cut to pieces by Crockett's gunners at the stockade, veered to the left and stormed the southwest corner, while defenders there were busy firing into ranks advancing across the plaza from the north. Within minutes the eighteen-pounder was captured and turned against the Texans.

Crockett's men were caught in the open in front of the church. Some managed to reach momentary sanctuary in the church or long barracks, but most were trapped by advancing Mexicans from the north or west. Bowie knife, tomahawk, and clubbed rifle met Mexican bayonet in fierce hand-to-hand combat. It lasted but a few moments, but they made a fine end.

Inside the church sacristy, Susannah Dickinson clutched her daughter to her breast as the sounds of combat grew louder. Suddenly Almeron Dickinson, powder-stained and wild-eyed, burst into the room. "Great God, Sue, the Mexicans are inside our walls!" he cried, embracing her for a final time. "If they spare you, save my child!" Moments later he was gone, climbing back to his battery atop the church. It was not long, however, before Dickinson's guns fell silent, their crews cut down by the powerful eighteen-pounder now in Mexican hands.

Jim Bowie waited in his room in the low barracks, a brace of pistols across his lap and the knife at his side. Pale and emaciated, he was not far from death anyway. The door crashed open and angry, determined faces peered in at the bedridden man. As they rushed upon him, Bowie's pistols snapped in defiance, and the acrid smell of powder filled the tiny room. In their rage the Mexicans tossed him on their bayonets like so much hay.

In the long barracks the Texans fought bitterly from room to room, contesting every inch. The darkness of the chambers was compounded by the swirl of black powder so that men grappled, died or conquered without ever seeing the faces of their enemy. Finally Mexican gunners pulled the captured cannons into the doorways and fired pointblank into the rooms. Overhead, on the roof of the long barracks, a brave young lieutenant gave his life to raise the Mexican tricolor over the Alamo.

Next the Mexicans battered down the doors of the church and quickly overwhelmed the last defenders. To the distant wail of the "Degüello," the wounded were murdered in a frenzied orgy of slaughter. General Castrillón, sickened by this carnage, halted the advance of his men on a knot of seven bloodied, defiant defenders.

Bowie knives and clubbed rifles in hand, this pitiful remnant was all that was left of the garrison of the Alamo. Castrillón begged them to surrender, offering them clemency and asserting that further resistance served no purpose. Their situation clearly hopeless, the cornered men agreed to this gallant offer. Among this handful of survivors was Davy Crockett.

It was now 6:30 A.M., and a cold, hazy dawn illuminated the ghastly scene as Santa Anna inspected the work of his troops. His elation over victory was tempered by early casualty figures. The attacking columns had lost over six hundred men, a full one-third of the troops involved in the battle. Santa Anna and his staff were between the church and the long barracks when Castrillón approached with his seven prisoners.

Lieutenant Colonel José Enrique de la Peña of the *Zapadores* battalion, standing near Santa Anna, was particularly impressed by the bearing and courage of one of the prisoners, a man "of great stature, well-proportioned, with regular features, in whose face there was the imprint of adversity, but in whom one also noticed a degree of resignation and nobility that did him honor."

Castrillón presented this captive to Santa Anna as

"the naturalist David Crockett, well known in North America for his unusual adventures," and implored his commander to spare him and the other prisoners. Santa Anna angrily cut Castrillón off short, and turning to a group of nearby sappers, ordered the immediate execution of the Americans. Horrified by this base order, both officers and men hesitated to comply, but several of Santa Anna's staff officers drew their previously unbloodied sabers and fell upon the helpless prisoners. Lieutenant Colonel de la Peña turned his face from the carnage, sickened and disgusted, while the enraged Castrillón stormed off to his tent. The battle of the Alamo was over.

Minutes later soldiers escorted the noncombatant survivors out of the ruined church. There were ten Mexican women and children, including Bowie's two sisters-in-law and the widow of Alamo defender Gregorio Esparza and her four children, along with Susannah Dickinson and her daughter, Angelina.

Two members of the garrison survived as well. Brigido Guerrero, of Seguín's company, somehow managed to convince his captors that he had been a prisoner of the Texans, and talked his way out of the Alamo. Travis's slave, Joe, had hidden himself in one of the barracks rooms after his master's death and, although slightly wounded, was saved by a Mexican officer. Santa Anna did not make war on slaves, Joe was informed. He was taken before the general and ordered to point out the bodies of Travis and Bowie. The bodies of the 183 slain defenders of the Alamo were then stacked in three pyres and burned.

The following day Mrs. Dickinson was set at liberty. Santa Anna instructed her to carry the story of the Alamo to the rest of Texas, with the admonition that further resistance to the central government was hopeless. She was joined on the road to Gonzales by Joe, and they reached Sam Houston's camp on March 13.

Houston, who had already received news of the fall of the Alamo, now ordered a general retreat. The retreat of his tiny army soon turned into a mass exodus, as the American settlers packed up and scurried eastward in what came to be called the "Runaway Scrape."

At first Houston's army grew fat with volunteers, but as the retreat continued, morale plummeted, compounded by the news of the massacre of Fannin and his men at Goliad on March 27. There were many desertions, but by mid-April the army had stabilized at eight hundred untrained men. Santa Anna, in hot pursuit, unwisely divided his command, sending General Antonio Gaona off to the north with seven hundred men. When finally he faced Houston far to the east on the plain of San Jacinto he had but 1,250 men.

The Mexican troops, exhausted from forced marches, were settling into a drowsy siesta at 4:30 P.M. on April 21, 1836, when Houston led his army forward to the attack. Houston's fifers played a popular ballad of the day, "Will You Come to the Bower?" as the troops

silently advanced across the open plain. The musical strain was suddenly lost amidst the spontaneous cries of "Remember the Alamo!" Captain Juan Seguín and his Tejano scouts took it up in Spanish as well—"¡Recuerden el Alamo!"—and the fierce cry echoed down the line.

The surprised Mexicans barely had time to unstack their muskets before the enraged Texans were upon them. Most fled in panic only to be shot down. General Castrillón attempted to rally his stricken troops, but it was hopeless. Atop an ammunition box he calmly folded his arms and faced the Texans, proudly calling out in Spanish: "I've been in forty battles and never showed my back. I'm too old to do it now." Despite the efforts of Texan officers to save him, the gallant Castrillón was soon riddled with bullets. Santa Anna, awakened from an opium-induced slumber by the assault, mounted his horse and escaped, only to be captured the next day.

Houston, his ankle shattered by a musket ball, was lying on a blanket, propped up against a tree when Santa Anna was brought before him. "That man may consider himself born to no common destiny who has conquered the Napoleon of the West," Santa Anna haughtily announced. "And now it remains for him to be generous to the vanquished."

"You should have remembered that at the Alamo," Houston snapped back.

It was a stunning victory. The Texans lost but nine dead and thirty-four wounded, while the Mexican army suffered six hundred killed and six hundred and fifty captured. Santa Anna obligingly ordered his remaining four thousand troops out of Texas and was held hostage until November to insure their compliance. The independence of Texas was won, and for a decade it remained a republic before joining the Union as the twenty-eighth state on December 29, 1845.

It was February 1837 before Juan Seguín, promoted to lieutenant colonel and appointed military governor of Bexar, returned to bury the remains of the defenders of the Alamo. Seguín gathered up what ashes and bones remained from the three funeral pyres and placed them in a coffin engraved with the names of Travis, Bowie, and Crockett. On February 25, 1837, he conducted a somber funeral ceremony for his compatriots in arms.

"These remains which we have had the honor of carrying on our shoulders are the ones of the brave heroes who died in the Alamo," Seguín declared in his funeral oration. "Yes, my friends, they preferred a thousand deaths rather than surrender to serve the yoke of the tyrant. What a brilliant example. Worthy indeed of being recorded in the pages of history. . . The worthy remains of our venerable companions bearing witness, I ask you to tell the world: Texas shall be free and independent or we shall perish with glory in battle."

It was a fitting epitaph.★

Paul Andrew Hutton teaches history at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, and is editor of New Mexico Historical Review. He is the author of Phil Sheridan and His Army (University of Nebraska Press, 1985) and is presently working on a study of the Alamo as an American icon.

"The worthy remains of our venerable companions bearing witness, I ask you to tell the world: Texas shall be free and independent or we shall perish with glory in battle."

COURTESY OF THE TEXAS STATE ARCHIVES, AUSTIN



Dispatched as a messenger from the Alamo days before it fell, Mexican-Texas patriot Juan Nepomuceno Seguín returned too late to join his comrades in death, but was among those winning victory later on the battlefield at San Jacinto. He is portrayed here as a Texas Colonel in 1838—a year after his eloquent burial tribute to the Alamo's heroes (quotation above).

**An exhibition traces the iconography of a heroic battle
and an enduring American symbol.**

Alamo Images

by Susan Prendergast Schoelwer



During the century and a half since the Alamo fell, its story has been told and retold. Gradually, the geographically-isolated military encounter became transformed into an internationally-recognized icon of individual courage and valor, heavily embellished with myth, and taking a place in the history of doomed heroics alongside those of Leonidas at Thermopylae, Custer at the Little Big Horn, and Gordon at Khartoum. As part of the Texas sesquicentennial celebration and Southern Methodist University's seventy-fifth anniversary, SMU curator Susan Prendergast Schoelwer has

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assembled over three hundred historic pictures, maps, and other items relating to the Alamo story, creating an exhibition that explores the Alamo myth and what it may reflect about the American character. A sampling from *Alamo Images: Changing Perceptions of a Texas Experience* follows on the next eight pages. ★

Henry Arthur McArdle's surrealistic painting Dawn at the Alamo, completed during 1876-83, hangs in the Texas State Capitol. McArdle was originally a portrait artist, and this training is quite evident in his treatment of the lunging figure of James Bowie, dimly visible at lower left; in Davy Crockett, swinging the remnants of "Old Betsy" at lower right; and in William Travis, stomping on a wounded Mexican whilst dispatching a flag bearer, upper right.



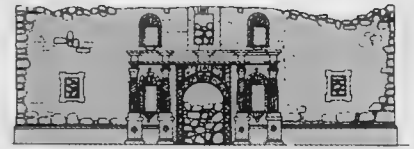
DETAIL OF THE ORIGINAL: COURTESY OF THE ARCHIVES DIVISION, TEXAS STATE LIBRARY, AUSTIN

The Alamo in History

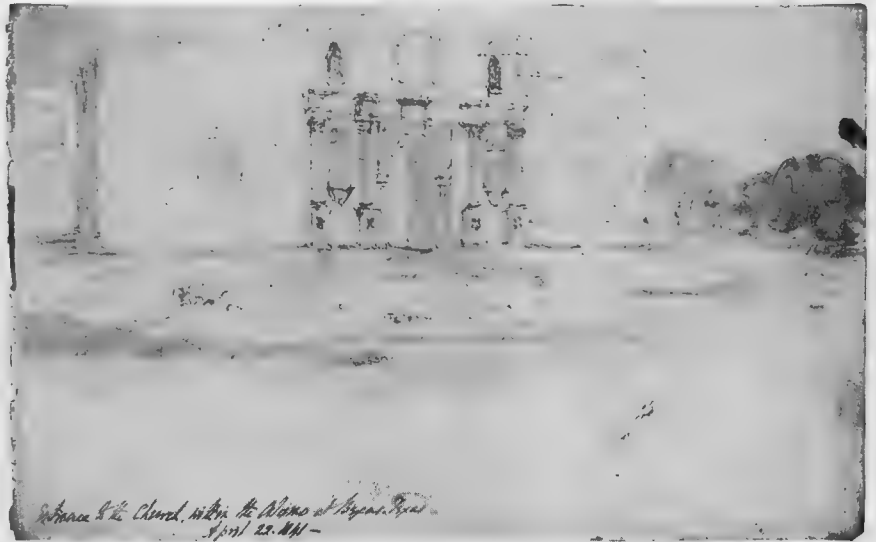
Conjectural drawings (top) by Jack D. Eaton show the Alamo chapel as it may have looked during its eighteenth-century mission days, and its supposed appearance when taken under siege in 1836.

Five years after the fall of the Alamo, Thomas Falconer, English-born draughtsman and scientific observer to the ill-fated Texan Santa Fe expedition, made a watercolor sketch (center) of the church ruins, probably little-changed from their appearance during the battle.

Throughout the 1840s, the Alamo grounds provided quarters for a variety of transient and permanent residents—local Tejanos, impoverished European settlers, California-bound emigrants, and even Anglo-American families. In 1848 Army Captain Seth Eastman sketched Tejano quarters (bottom) that probably stood along a section of ruined arcade just inside of the west wall.



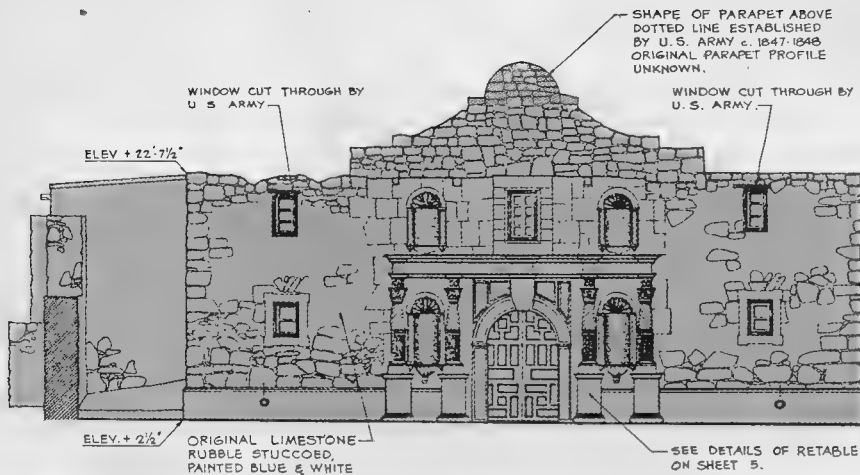
FROM "EXCAVATIONS AT THE ALAMO SHRINE" BY JACK D. EATON (1980)



COURTESY OF THE WESTERN AMERICANA COLLECTION, BEINECKE LIBRARY, YALE UNIVERSITY



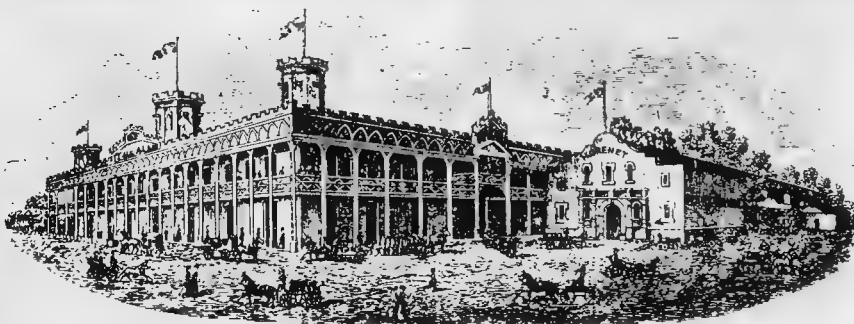
COURTESY OF THE MCNAY ART MUSEUM, SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS, GIFT OF THE PEARL BREWING COMPANY



A 1961 architectural drawing for the Historic American Buildings Survey (left) shows the now-familiar central parapet or gable and second-floor windows that were added by the U.S. Army, which used the Alamo as a supply depot during 1848–79. A photograph made sometime during this period (below) shows some of the activity there as Army wagons loaded and unloaded commissary and ordnance supplies bound for posts on the Texas frontier.



COURTESY OF CATHOLIC ARCHIVES, AUSTIN

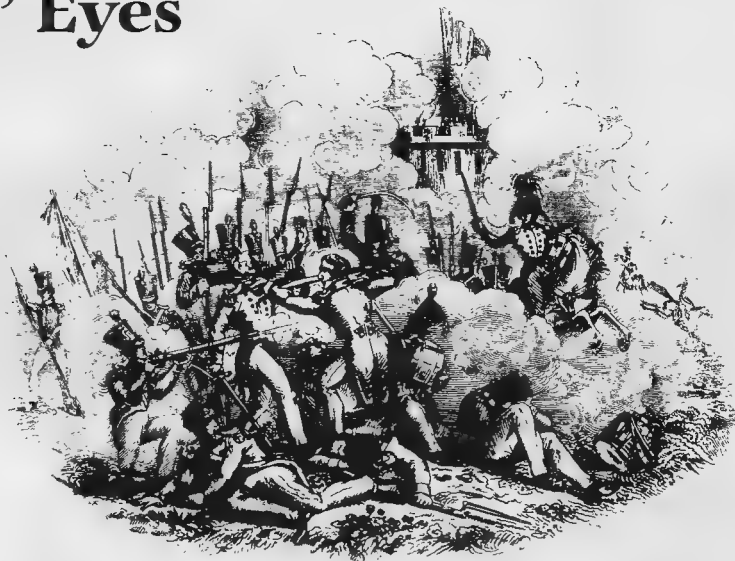


THE ALAMO AS REPAIRED BY GRENET.

COURTESY OF THE DEGOLYER LIBRARY, SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY

In 1877 merchant Hugo Grenet purchased the old Alamo convent (long barracks) from the Catholic Church and remodeled it for use as a retail store (left). Grenet added two-story wooden arcades to the stone walls, embellishing them with crenelated cornices, octagonal turrets, and even false wooden guns. His changes and commercial use of the property later became a major point of controversy in the struggle to preserve the Alamo.

Through Artists' Eyes



COURTESY OF THE DECOLYER LIBRARY, SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY

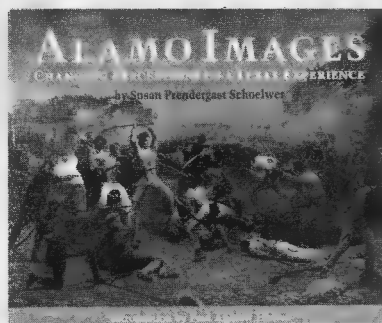
The earliest-known depiction of the Alamo fight (above right), the title-page illustration from Connecticut Senator John M. Niles's 1838 book History of South America and Mexico, with a Complete View of Texas, bears little resemblance to the actual event, showing the Alamo itself as a battlemented turret strongly reminiscent of the romantic tales of Sir Walter Scott. The central figure, although unidentified, strikes the lunging pose traditionally assigned to Davy Crockett and may have provided the prototype for later imagery of Crockett's last stand. One of dozens of such pictures of the folk hero (right) appeared in Ben Hardin's Crockett Almanac of 1842.



COURTESY OF THE DECOLYER LIBRARY, SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY

"Alamo Images: Changing Perceptions of a Texas Experience," the exhibition now showing at Southern Methodist University's DeGolyer Library in Dallas, will remain there through March 14. Tracing the historic fort's mythical and symbolic roles in society, the show includes over three hundred historic photographs, drawings, maps, manuscripts, movie stills and posters, games, ephemera, and reproductions of paintings, as well as one of eight known original copies of the Texas Declaration of Independence.

A traveling version of the Alamo exhibition will also visit more than a dozen cities in Texas during 1986. Information on sites and bookings is available from the Texas Human-



ties Resource, University of Texas at Arlington, (817) 273-2767.

The comprehensive 224-page catalog for the exhibition is available from the SMU Press, Box 415, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX 75275. Containing more than one hundred illustrations,

and essays by Susan Prendergast Schoelwer, Paul Andrew Hutton, Tom W. Glaser, and Clifton H. Jones, this volume is highly recommended to anyone with an interest in the Alamo and its place in American history. Cost for the softcover edition is \$24.95 plus \$1.19 postage and handling.

A symposium, "Reapproaching the Texas Revolution: The Alamo Myth," was also held at Southern Methodist University on November 16 in connection with the exhibition. A four-cassette set of tapes of the symposium, which featured numerous historians and Alamo specialists, is available from the DeGolyer Library, SMU Box 396, Dallas, TX 75275 for \$24.00.



COURTESY OF THE DAUGHTERS OF THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS LIBRARY AT THE ALAMO, SAN ANTONIO



In a print (above) dating from 1900–35 by Canadian-born illustrator Norman Price, William Travis watches as his men march single-file across the line he has drawn in the dust, signifying their decision to remain and fight to the end. This episode was said to have been witnessed on March 5, 1836, by soldier-of-fortune Louis Rose, who escaped from the fortress the night before the final battle.

Davy Crockett leads the final resistance (left) in Larousse's Histoire du Far West, a 1980 French comic book version of the Alamo story, illustrated by José Bielsa.

The Legend Lives On



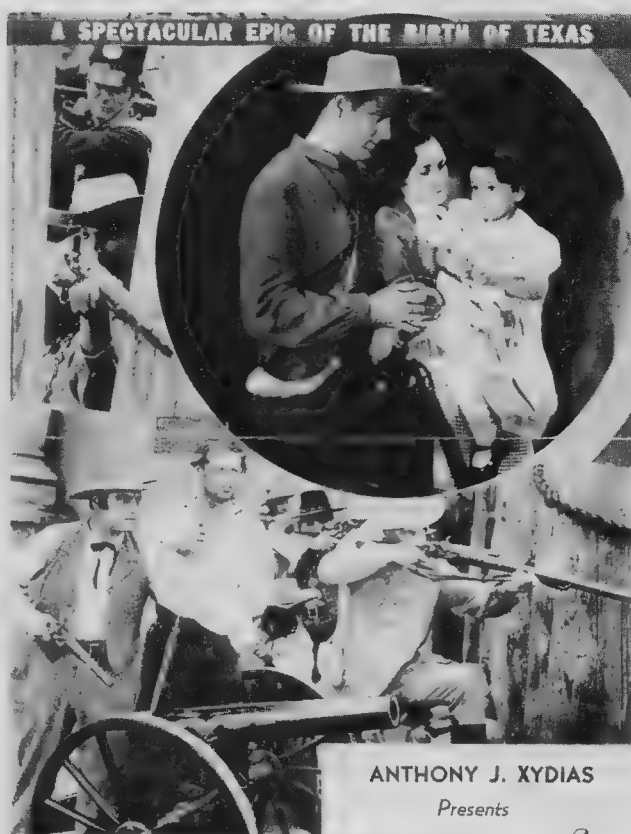
DAUGHTERS OF THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS LIBRARY AT THE ALAMO, SAN ANTONIO

*The Alamo saga has provided inspiration for numerous motion pictures, each with its own selection of heroes and interpretation of the story. The scene above is from the first-known film of the genre, Gaston Melie's *The Immortal Alamo*, released in 1911. Heroes of the Alamo (poster at right) was a low-budget 1937 film that focused on the tragic story of the Dickinson family instead of Bowie, Crockett, or Travis.*



UNITED ARTISTS, 1960

*In a climactic scene from John Wayne's epic 1960 film *The Alamo*, Wayne as Davy Crockett dies at lancepoint while attempting to blow up the powder magazine—a role historically attributed to Robert Evans, a lesser-known Alamo defender.*



COLLECTION OF PAUL A. HUTTON





BUENA VISTA, 1955

William Travis (actor Don Megowan, above center) draws his fabled line in Walt Disney's popular 1955 production, Davy Crockett, King of the Wild Frontier, which starred Fess Parker (above left) as Crockett.



PUBLIC BROADCASTING SYSTEM, 1982



COMMONWEALTH UNITED, 1969

Edward James Olmos (left) played Santa Anna in the 1982 television movie Seguin, a revisionist film intended to correct Anglo-American perceptions of the Tejanos. To clearly delineate good from bad, Olmos portrayed the Mexican general at his worst—as mean, vicious, and snarling as his harshest critics would have had him. Peter Ustinov, as General Maximilian Rodriguez de Santos, appeared before the Alamo chapel (above) in Viva Max!, a 1969 film drawing controversy for its rampant political satire. ★

The Men of Gonzales: They Answered the Call

by Paula Mitchell Marks

Whenever we remember the fall of the Alamo, certain heroic figures spring to mind. We see William Barret Travis penning his war cry "God and Texas—Victory or Death"; Davy Crockett asking for and receiving the most dangerous post on the mission wall; James Bowie fighting off the bluecoats from his sickbed. But perhaps the most heroic story of all belongs to a group of thirty-two settlers from Gonzales, Texas, who rode to the aid of their besieged countrymen when no one else would or could. The Gonzales men knew the near-hopelessness of the situation, yet still they came to relieve the weary defenders and buy time for the republic that was being formed at Washington-on-the-Brazos.

Travis had sent a call for help to the small settlement on the Guadalupe River as soon as Santa Anna's troops clattered into San Antonio de Bexar in February 1836. Gonzales was a logical place to look for aid; sixty-five miles east of the Mexican town, it was the closest North American settlement. And its residents were already known for their commitment to the republican cause. In fact, the revolution had begun in this frontier town just a few months before, when a Mexican detachment from San Antonio arrived to retrieve an old brass cannon lent the colonists for protection against Indians. The soldiers had been rebuffed by an armed force of settlers firing the disputed weapon and flying a white cotton flag emblazoned with the taunt "Come and Take It."

Since that eventful October day, Gonzales had become a rallying point for rebellion, and San Antonio's Mexican garrison had fallen to the "Texians" in the siege of Bexar. Then, on February 24, 1836, couriers John W. Smith and John Sutherland rode into town to report that Santa Anna was besieging the small force guarding the captured city. Bowie and Travis and their men were entrenched in the Alamo mission and urgently needed reinforcements.

A small contingent of Gonzales-area residents quickly formed to answer the call. However, they felt obliged to wait for additional reinforcements from Goliad, sixty miles to the south. An Alamo messenger had been sent to this site, as well, for here Colonel James Fannin had five hundred men, the bulk of what was left of the Texan army after the siege of Bexar.

But Fannin's men did not come to the aid of the Alamo. Their commander wavered, at one point set-

ting off at the head of most of his troops, then letting a broken wagon dictate a return to Goliad. By February 29, he had decided against lending assistance.

At the same time that Fannin made his fateful decision, the Gonzales men were concluding that they could wait no longer. They knew from new couriers that the situation at the Alamo was growing desperate, and they also realized that no other help might be forthcoming. The other contingent of the Texan army, under James Grant and Frank Johnson, was having its own problems with Mexican troops to the south, and no real government existed to direct the armies or provide relief, for a provisional revolutionary government had fallen apart in January. The only hope now would come from the independence convention scheduled for March 1 at Washington-on-the-Brazos, but it was unlikely the delegates could act quickly to round up and direct troops and supplies.

So the Gonzales men set forth on February 29 with the grim knowledge that they might be providing the only relief for the doomed fortress. As members of Green DeWitt's colony, many of them had already put three to five years of their lives into the Texas dream, clearing and building and plowing, raising families, living under constant alert for Indian attack and with uncertainty over the situation with Mexico. They ranged in age from sixteen-year-old Galba Fuqua to forty-eight-year-old Jacob Darst, who, like many of his neighbors, originally hailed from Tennessee.

Each man had his own story. Thirty-six-year-old John Flanders, leaving his home in Massachusetts after a business disagreement with his father, had moved first to New Orleans, then to DeWitt's Texas colony. Thomas Jackson and Jonathan Lindley had both emigrated from the British Isles. Brothers John and William King of Gonzales had decided to ride to the Alamo together. And Isaac Millsaps was leaving a blind wife and seven children in the settlement.

A few in the company had already shared in the Alamo's defense and were now returning. Travis had sent Gonzales resident Albert Martin from the mission to help get reinforcements, and, as a captain, Martin assumed command of the group. He was assisted by twenty-six-year-old Lieutenant George Kimball.

On the last day of February, thirty-two volunteers rode westward, carrying the "Come and Take It" flag created for the October encounter. Messenger John

Lone Star Rising

Texas Before & After the Alamo

by Archie P. McDonald

Thousands of years before the first European arrived, Paleo-Americans and then American Indians roamed the forests, prairies, and mountains of the vast territory that would one day become defined as Texas. Not yet identified by its present borders, this Texas land blended the three major land forms of North America: the Southern Forest, the Plains, and the Western Desert and Mountain regions.

All who came to this vacant land gave it definition. The Paleo-Americans hunted the plains for giant prey, surviving on large bisons and other animals. The various tribes of American Indians—Caddo, Karankawa, Atakapa, Coahuiltecan, and Comanche, to name but a few—adapted to whatever environment they inhabited and hunted, fished, and, in time, grew agricultural crops. Indeed, New World Indian farmers developed the majority of the world's edible crops. Texas Indians lagged behind their kind to the south in what Europeans called civilization, but they had thriving cultures in all parts of their lands.

Then came the Europeans. The first Spaniard to see Texas, Alonso Alvarez de Pineda, arrived in 1519. He surveyed the coast, landed briefly at the mouth of the Rio Grande, which was called *Rio de las Palmas* by his expedition, and named the area *Amichel*. Within a year, Diego de Camargo duplicated the voyage. In 1528, Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, shipwrecked survivor of the Narváez expedition, was blown ashore at Mulhado, or Galveston, with eighty of his countrymen. Within a year, only fifteen of them survived, and seven years later there were only four, including de Vaca, who remained to tell the Spanish patrol that found them of the wonders of Texas, especially stories from the Indians about cities made of gold.

Such news quickened the interest of the Spaniards. Viceroy Mendoza sent Marcos de Niza, a priest who desired to take Christianity to the Northern Provinces, to confirm the story. Whether by deceit or honest mistake, de Niza's report sustained de Vaca's stories. So in 1540, Francisco Vázquez de Coronado led a mighty *entrada* (expedition) to locate the Cities of Gold. For two years, his several hundred men trekked across Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas in a fruitless search for the precious metal. Their failure to find gold fixed the Spanish policy toward the north: thereafter they did not want to spend unnecessary funds on

the region, but neither did they want others, particularly their French and English neighbors in North America, to have it. Only when the Spanish felt their claims jeopardized did they send missionaries or soldiers to the area as signposts of Spanish claims.

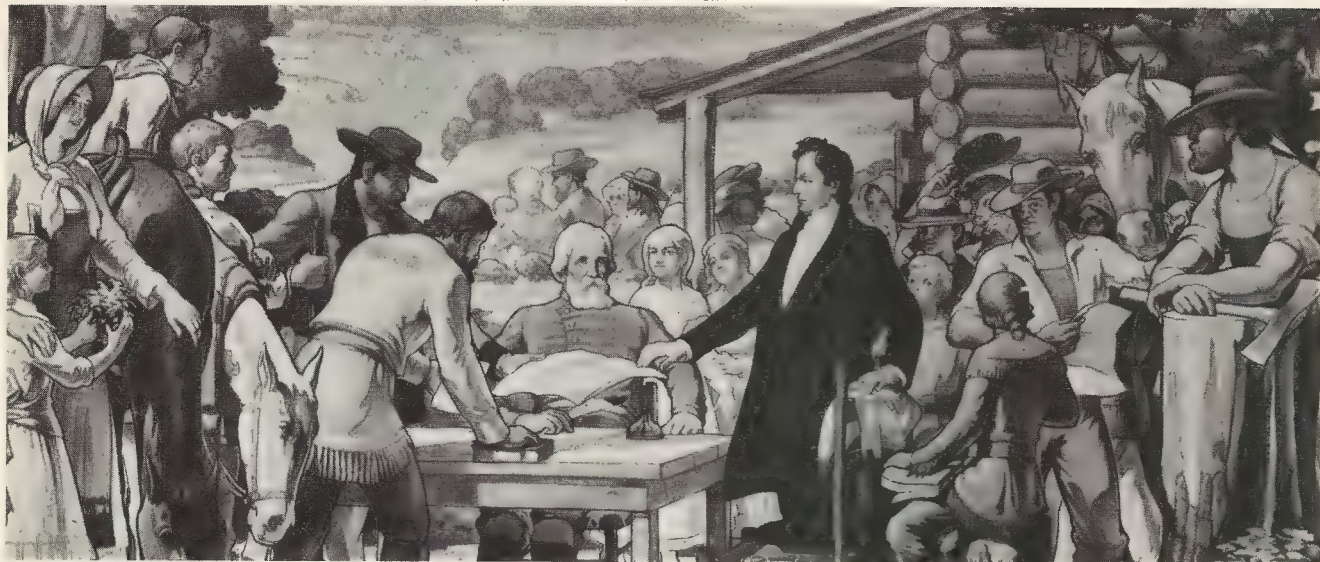
The first such effort was the result of the establishment of a plantation by Rene Robert Cavelier Sieur de La Salle of Fort Saint Louis near Matagorda Bay in 1685. Governor Alonso de León launched eleven expeditions to locate the fort, only to find that La Salle's own men had murdered their leader and that Karankawa Indians had destroyed the fort.

In 1690 de León commissioned the Mission San Francisco de las Tejas, located nearly four hundred miles northeast of the fort in the direction of French claims along the Mississippi River, as a signpost to the French. Father Damien Massanet headed the mission. The Indians showed an interest that quickly waned because of quarrels among the priests and presidio soldiers and because they did not find Christianity to their liking. All the clergy were gone within a few years.

Spanish interest in Texas languished until 1714, when the remarkable Frenchman Louis Juchereau de St. Denis walked from Natchitoches, Louisiana, to the Rio Grande. St. Denis proposed a trade relationship between the two nations along their frontier. Back came the missionaries, this time to found six missions in eastern Texas and western Louisiana, one as far east as Robiline, Louisiana. St. Denis established trade, however illegal it might have been, and once again the Spanish enforced their presence in Texas. Other missions, most notably San Antonio de Valero, also came into existence to fasten Spain's grip on her northern provinces, but few succeeded in converting many Indians.

Following the transfer of French territory west of the Mississippi River to Spain by the Peace of Paris Treaty in 1763, Spain no longer worried about penetrations of their territory from that nation, and they could not imagine that the Anglos could move all the way from the Appalachian barrier in less than several hundred years. So, following the advice of their investigator, the Baron

Suggested additional reading: Texas: All Hail the Mighty State (Eakin, 1983) and Travis (Pemberton, 1977), both by Archie P. McDonald.



de Rubi, they determined to pull back to the Rio Grande. The New Regulation of the Presidios in 1772 closed all missions beyond San Antonio and even ordered civilians to move there as well. In effect, Spain returned most of Texas to the Indians.

Most of the Spanish who had established farms and ranches in East Texas moved reluctantly; indeed, soldiers had to flush some of them out of the woods to compel them to go. No sooner had they arrived in San Antonio than their leader, Antonio Gil YBarbo, petitioned that they be allowed to return to their homes. They were permitted to move east, but no closer than one hundred leagues (approximately three hundred miles) from Natchitoches.

YBarbo led his settlers to the banks of the Trinity River, where they founded the community of Bucareli. They remained there through four years of floods and Comanche raids. Then, without authorization, they moved east to the site of the Mission Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe de los Nacogdoches, probably the only Spanish building still standing in eastern Texas. YBarbo later informed the authorities in San Antonio of his action, and in 1779 they recognized the *pueblo* of Nacogdoches and acknowledged YBarbo's leadership of the community.

The Spanish still did not want foreigners in their territory, but far more rapidly than either they or the Americans imagined, the first of frontiersmen from the United States began to filter into Texas in the 1790s. William Barr and Samuel Davenport established a trading post in Nacogdoches in 1798, and local officials made them citizens and permitted them to do business. Others just quietly slipped into the area unannounced and claimed land they would confirm later.

Some Americans came in conquest. The Spanish suspected Philip Nolan's forays into Texas to round up mustangs for sale in Louisiana masked his real purpose of scouting the area for General James Wilkinson, commander of the United States forces in the Old South-

Laying the foundations for a colony that would later give birth to a republic, and then a state, Stephen F. Austin (in dark coat) and Baron de Bastrop, land commissioner of the Mexican government (seated), issue land titles to Texas colonists in 1823.

west. Eventually they attempted to arrest Nolan and his men, and he was killed in a skirmish near Waco.

In 1812 Augustus Magee and Bernardo Gutierrez de Lara led the Army of the North across the Sabine to Nacogdoches, where they proclaimed Texas free from Spain. They published the first newspaper in Texas, the *Gaceta de Tejas*, while occupying the Stone Fort before moving on to La Bahia. Later Magee died, some said at the hands of Gutierrez, and then General Joaquín Arrendondo led an expedition north that purged Texas of the venture and its sympathizers.

So Texas remained substantially Spanish, save for a few isolated Americans who slipped by unnoticed or were tolerated, until the Adams-Onís Treaty of 1819. By its provisions, the United States gained Florida but forever renounced any claims to Texas. The anger of slave-state Americans, who wanted the opportunity to expand westward, brought forth two expeditions led by Dr. James Long of Natchez, Mississippi. Again Texas was declared independent, and again the Spanish prevailed. Long was killed, and Jane, his young bride, had to return to the United States. She later made her way back to Texas and would be honored with the designation of the "Mother of Texas" because of her ordeal in the wilderness after her husband's capture.

With such a stormy beginning, Anglo immigration to Texas seemed unlikely for years to come. But this was not the case. Moses Austin, an American lead miner and businessman who had moved to Missouri while that territory remained in Spanish hands, went broke in the panic of 1819. He remembered that years before, the Spanish had allowed William Morgan to lead a colony of Irishmen from New Jersey to establish a settlement at New Madrid, Missouri. Morgan had become the first

empresario in Spain's North American territory.

Austin determined to duplicate Morgan's example in Texas to recoup his fortune. He traveled to San Antonio, where he was rebuffed by Spanish officials until an old friend, the Baron de Bastrop, vouched for him. Then Austin's request was forwarded to higher authority, and surprisingly, the reply was positive. But Moses Austin died before he could establish his colony. And before his son, Stephen Fuller Austin, could fully claim his inheritance, the Spanish government of Mexico fell to nationalist revolutionaries.

Over the next several years, Stephen Austin patiently worked with a succession of Mexican republicans, imperialists under Colonel Agustín de Iturbide, and States'-rights proponents following the coup that finally established the Constitution of 1824. In each case his rights were confirmed, only to be lost when the existing government fell. Finally, as one of the architects of a new Mexican government, he received permission to settle three hundred families on his grant. Later, more than thirty others received empresarial grants in Texas.

Austin established his colony along the coast, where it was approximately divided into three parts by the Brazos and Colorado rivers. It extended northward to the El Camino Real, or the highway connecting Nacogdoches and San Antonio. His colony was west of the eastern thickets and its fields could be cleared easily, yet it still had sufficient rainfall for the crops his Southern American immigrants already knew how to grow.

Life in Texas would remain difficult until the Civil War, with little noticeable difference between the colonial, republic, or early statehood periods. Most early immigrants walked to Texas, some carrying literally all their possessions, and others walking beside wagons. The more fortunate came by coastal boats from New Orleans. Some, such as Jared Groce, were wealthy, but most were short of cash. They all sought opportunity and cheap land. Each immigrant received a league of land (over 4,400 acres), and additional amounts could be obtained with little expense.

Food was abundant for skilled hunters or fishermen, but their diet remained limited and seasonal. Without modern methods of food preservation, the early Texans ate greens in the warm months and lived on meat and ground corn the rest of the year. They lived in log cabins, in time perhaps a dogtrot house, and when lumber became available, boarded over the logs to hide early poverty.

All were or became nominal Roman Catholics and Mexican citizens as the price of admission to Texas, considered to be formalities and a cheap enough price for the amount of land involved. It seemed a good life. Then the trouble came.

Some historians date the beginning of the Texas Revolution as early as the Fredonia Rebellion in 1826–27. Empresario Haden Edwards obtained lands around Nacogdoches, and, because of the presence of previous Spanish, Mexican, and Anglo land grantees, he had dif-

ficulty in establishing his claims. In despair he declared his area free of Mexico, but a single military expedition scattered his supporters.

From that moment some Mexican leaders, especially the extreme nationalists, resented the presence of Americans in Texas. They persuaded President Vicente Guerrero to abolish slavery in Mexico in 1829, a move aimed at the Americans in Texas who held slaves. The next year they secured the passage of the Law of April 6, 1830, which stopped American immigration, began the collection of customs, and forbade trade with the United States. Many Texans believed this to be in violation of the Mexican Constitution of 1824, which had handed such matters over to the individual states.

Real trouble began in 1832 when the commander of the Mexican garrison at Anáhuac, Juan (John) Davis Bradburn, arrested William Barret Travis and his law partner, Patrick Jack, for making trouble. Settlers from the various colonies assembled near Turtle Bayou and adopted resolutions pledging their loyalty to the Constitution of 1824 and their willingness to fight centralists, such as Bradburn, who had violated it.

The matter was settled when José de Las Piedras, Bradburn's superior, arrived at Anáhuac. Piedras fired Bradburn and released Travis and Jack. When Piedras returned to his duty station in Nacogdoches he tried to prevent a similar occurrence by ordering citizens in the area to surrender their guns. Instead they brought their weapons to town for a battle on August 2–3 that ended with the surrender of Piedras. Finally, John Austin had led a group from Anáhuac to Velasco to obtain a cannon for use against Bradburn. He had to shoot his way past soldiers commanded by Colonel Domingo Ugartechea.

These three disturbances of 1832 set in motion a series of events that led inevitably to revolution. Already, States'-rights proponents under General Santa Anna, at heart a centralist but willing to appear in any guise to obtain power, combated the government. Santa Anna's lieutenant, José Antonio Mexia, came to Texas to investigate the meaning of the disturbances. Stephen F. Austin entertained Mexia at a gala in his honor at Brazoria and succeeded in convincing the Mexican general that the Texans were merely standing up for the States'-rights constitution, and therefore supported Santa Anna.

Mexia returned convinced, but still the Americans felt the need to make a formal statement to the central government. In December 1832, delegates met at San Felipe de Austin and drafted a petition that requested the reopening of immigration from the United States, relief from paying customs, and, above all, separate statehood within the Mexican union. The political chief at San Antonio brusquely rejected their petition, and so a second convention was held in January 1833. This time a more militant atmosphere prevailed. The delegates drafted a similar proposal, added a draft of a constitution for their proposed state, and convinced Stephen F. Austin to take their request to Mexico City.

Austin found the capital city in turmoil. Recent elec-

tions had placed Santa Anna and Valentine Gomez Farias in the presidency and vice-presidency of Mexico. Santa Anna allowed his liberal subordinate to attempt sweeping reforms of all three major power bases in the country—the landowners, the church, and the army. Farias was much too busy to worry about Texas, and after a time Austin grew impatient. What he intended as candor appeared to be a threat when he told Farias that he might as well accept Texas as a separate state because it already was one.

Austin wrote to the *ayuntamiento*, or governing council, at San Antonio, suggesting that they begin their government. Instead, the council turned the letter over to the central government, and Austin was arrested. During the more than eighteen months he remained in prison, Texans remained quiet in fear for Austin's life. Meanwhile, Santa Anna seized full power, deposed his vice president, and summoned a new congress that set aside the liberal Constitution of 1824. In its place Santa Anna established a Mexican government under his complete control.

The summer of 1835 proved eventful in Texas. Austin returned, neither formally charged of a crime nor pardoned, just released. And Captain Antonio Tenorio arrived at Anáhuac to resume the collection of customs. A protest group convinced William B. Travis to lead about thirty men to drive Tenorio from Texas. They had little trouble in doing so, but their action upset the Peace Party, a group that feared his action would bring down the wrath of the central government.

This in fact resulted when General Martín Perfecto de Cós, Santa Anna's brother-in-law who was headquartered in Saltillo, ordered Travis's arrest. But even the Peace Party would not suffer this, so Cós threatened to arrest all the Texans.

Then in October, the Mexican commander ordered the surrender of a cannon held by the citizens of Gonzales. They successfully defended their cannon under a makeshift flag bearing the words "Come and Take It." When others gathered to defend the cannon that no longer needed defending, they were easily led to drive Cós, who had moved up to San Antonio, from Texas. At first a kind of siege was effected, and finally in December a five-day battle erupted. Led by Ben Milam, who died in the battle, the Texans defeated Cós, who agreed to leave Texas and never return.

Santa Anna determined immediately to avenge this insult to Mexico. While the Texans remained disorganized, gloried in their victory, and contemplated ill-advised raids on Mexico, he started north. Arriving at the Rio Grande in January 1836, Santa Anna dispatched General José Urrea along a southerly route to capture, and eventually execute, about five hundred men under James Fannin. Meanwhile he personally led a larger force to recapture San Antonio. This resulted in the thirteen-day siege and fall of the Alamo on March 6.

Nearly four hundred men gathered at Gonzales in response to requests for aid from the Alamo's commander,

William B. Travis. Leaderless, they did nothing. On March 1 a convention met at Washington-on-the-Brazos. The next day the delegates declared Texas free of Mexico, and in fifteen days more wrote a constitution for the Republic of Texas.

The convention designated Sam Houston the commander of their army, and he joined the volunteers at Gonzales on March 11. Learning of the fall of the Alamo, Houston led his men east, buying time for his army to grow larger. Then, on April 21, his men led him to battle on the plains at San Jacinto against Santa Anna, who had advanced ahead of his main army with less than one thousand men in an attempt to capture the Texans' government. The battle, which last only a few minutes, changed the destiny of nations. Immediately it confirmed the independence of Texas and eventually led to the Mexican-American War, when the infant and fragile republic became the twenty-eighth state of the American Union in 1845. When that war ended in 1848, Mexico was reduced in size by one-half, and the United States enlarged by one-quarter.

The Texans wrestled with the problems of independence under three presidents of the Republic. The first, Sam Houston, tried to keep the Republic's money problems and possible recapture by Mexico at bay by doing little. The second president, Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar, made war on Indians and Mexico alike in an attempt to expand Texas's influence. When Houston won a second term in 1841, he returned to a policy of peace.

Houston and Lamar differed markedly over the issue of statehood. Houston attempted to gain admission to the Union during both of his terms because he thought it the only course that would keep Texas safe from Mexico. Lamar approached the problem differently: he boldly tried to expand the Republic and did not desire statehood at all.

In 1844 Anson Jones became president, and although the path to statehood was rough—marked by a rejected treaty in the United States Senate in 1844—the U.S. presidential election of 1844 placed James Knox Polk, an expansionist, in the White House. Even before Polk took the inaugural oath, retiring President John Tyler started the process that made Texas a state in the Union on December 29, 1845.

Statehood in the American Union did not at first dramatically change the life of the average Texan, but eventually Texans prospered and assumed positions of national political and economic leadership. In time Texas became the third largest state in population, and the national leader in fields such as petroleum production. But even today, Texas has retained its own special character, a legacy of its stormy and heroic past. ★

History professor, editor, and author Archie P. McDonald is the current president of the Texas State Historical Association, executive director and editor of the East Texas Historical Association, and editor of Encyclopedia USA.

Long after the last defender fell, a struggle for the Alamo continued—this time over preservation of the historic site.

Continuing Battles for the Alamo

by Paul Andrew Hutton

The Alamo saga did not end amidst the smoke and carnage of March 6, 1836. The old mission-turned-fort had already served several masters before that bloody morning, and it would serve more afterwards. There would be more battles over the Alamo, but not with sword and bayonet as before. These new combatants would first strive to save the precious shrine from desecration and even demolition, and then engage in a long-term struggle to decide the nature of its preservation and presentation to the public. Despite the seemingly serene appearance of the Alamo today—standing amidst bustling downtown San Antonio, fronted by a small plaza and backed by spacious and lovely gardens—the struggle over preservation of the site is still far from over.

The Alamo complex, hardly in good repair before the Mexican assault, suffered heavy battle damage. That destruction was further compounded in May 1836 when the retreating Mexican troops dismantled most of the buildings, leveled all the walls that they could, filled in all trenches, burned the log wall defended by Davy Crockett's men, and gutted the chapel in an unsuccessful attempt to burn down that structure as well.

Those buildings that withstood the Mexican army demolition teams were soon reoccupied by local Tejanos, who had lived there before

the 1835–36 rebellion turned their neighborhood into a battleground. The gutted, roofless chapel became the home to thousands of bats, which poured out every twilight to fill the sky, contributing to countless ghost stories about the old church. Souvenir hunters carried off stones from the buildings, as did local residents who scavenged the place for materials for home improvement projects. Within a decade not much was left of the Alamo except the roofless chapel and the two-story convent (long barracks) building beside it on the north.

Then the U.S. Army rode to the rescue of the Alamo. The annexation of Texas to the United States in 1845, and the resultant conflict with Mexico, brought some two thousand troops to San Antonio under the command of Brigadier General John Wool. By late 1846, Wool's Quartermaster's Department was occupying the Alamo ruins as a supply depot. Repairs were undertaken on the sturdy convent buildings, so that by 1848 they had been totally refurbished and reroofed.

The chapel, however, at first was not altered by the soldiers. Army officer-artists Jacob Edmund Blake

(in 1845), Edward Everett (in 1847–1848), and Seth Eastman (in 1848–1849) executed accurate and compelling renderings of the Alamo, bequeathing an invaluable artistic and historic legacy to posterity.

The soldiers did not immediately renovate the chapel because both the Catholic Church and the city of San Antonio claimed ownership of the structure. By 1855, however, when the Texas Supreme Court upheld the Catholic Church's title, the Army had gone ahead with the refurbishing and dramatic alteration of the building. The Army agreed to pay the church a monthly rent for the property, but when church authorities attempted to rededicate the site as a place of worship in 1865, the military refused to give it up. After that, church authorities ceased to be interested in the building except as a source of monthly revenue.

Major Edwin Babbitt, who assumed the duties of San Antonio quartermaster in June 1849, recommended that all of the Alamo buildings be demolished and new storage facilities constructed. He was fortunately overruled by Quartermaster General Thomas Jessup (the infamous captor of the Seminole chief Osceola), who instead ordered Babbitt to repair the existing structures. Babbitt employed two local Germans, John Fries, a builder and contractor, and David Russi, a stone mason, to ren-

Suggested additional reading: Alamo Images: Changing Perceptions of a Texas Experience by Susan Prendergast Schoelwer (DeGolyer Library and Southern Methodist University Press, 1985).



ovate the chapel.

Fries and Russi's workers removed great piles of debris that in 1836 had served as an artillery rampart but now clogged the chapel's interior; raised the walls to the same height; constructed a roof; and built two stone pillars inside the chapel to support this covering. A second floor was added, with two new windows on the front, as were offices on the ground floor.

The most important change, however, was the addition of a gable—or hump—to the top of the chapel's front parapet. This simple gable soon became so identified with the Alamo that artists and later movie makers dared not omit it from their renderings of the battle, despite the fact that nothing even remotely resembling it ever existed before the Army renovation. The gable is now one of the clearest iconographic symbols in the nation.

The Army continued to use the site as a supply depot—with a brief interruption during the Civil War when it was occupied by Confederate troops—until 1879, when Fort Sam Houston was built three miles to the northeast. By that time military authorities were anxious to move, since the area around the Alamo had become the center of San Antonio's thriving saloon and gambling district. The adobe struc-

Turn-of-the-century tourists enter the old Alamo church, by this time firmly entrenched in the public mind as the prime focus of Texas history. The Alamo convent (long barracks) still stands at left, hidden behind an ornate wood facade and housing a mercantile establishment for "groceries, provisions, dry goods . . . whiskeys, wines, beer, cigars, tobacco, and country produce, second to none in the city."

tures that had once lined the Alamo's west wall had by then been torn down and replaced by new business structures, and a street now ran where William Barret Travis had defended the north wall. The old low barracks that formed the Alamo's south wall, and where Jim Bowie had died, had subsequently served for several years as a jail before being demolished in the late 1860s. In 1871 the city purchased the vacant lot in order to convert it into a plaza.

With the Army departing, the Catholic Church sold the convent (long barracks) building to businessman Honore Grenet. He converted the historic structure into a grocery and mercantile store, covering the stone walls with a monstrous two-story wooden facade complete with castle-like turrets and fake cannons. Grenet also leased the

chapel for use as a warehouse. He thoughtfully operated a little museum in one room of the convent.

When Grenet died in 1882, another mercantile concern, Hugo and Schmeltzer, purchased the convent and continued business as usual. The chapel, however, was sold by the Catholic Church to the State of Texas in 1883 for twenty thousand dollars. The city fathers of San Antonio agreed to maintain the chapel. They removed the second-story wooden floor put in by the Army, but otherwise left the building unaltered.

Despite the rescue of the chapel from its role as a warehouse, it remained in lamentable condition, serving as a better source of satiric humor than historic reverence. British tourists Alex Sweet and J. Armoy Knox were decidedly unimpressed by the Alamo when they visited San Antonio, recording their views in the book *On a Mexican Mustang through Texas* in 1905:

"From where I stood I could see the Alamo livery-stable, the Alamo cigar store, and the Alamo tin shop. I was told that around the corner I could find the Alamo bakery, the Alamo brewery, the engine-house of the Alamo Fire Company, and the rooms of the Alamo Literary Society. The aged gentleman said there was some talk of building



an Alamo monument, that the name and fame of the historic spot might be kept before the people; and I could not detect any sarcasm in the tone of his voice when he said it. I said that I was anxious to see the sacred premises—the cradle in which Texas liberty was first rocked. The aged gentleman said he would take pleasure in showing it to me. We walked across the plaza, and around the market-house.

“There, sir, is the old church of the Alamo!” and the aged gentleman anchored himself to the pavement with his cane, swelled his chest, and pointed proudly across the way.

“What! that flat-roofed building with the tree in front?”

“No, no! that is the Alamo saloon—a point of interest that we shall visit presently.”

“Ah! now I see—the structure with the striped hitching-post in front. Quaint old building, very!”

“Pshaw, no! That’s the Alamo Tonsorial Arena, as they call it, where you can get shaved, and have your hair amputated, for four bits. Look to the left of that—right over there.”

“Now I see the original godfather of all these bits of scenery he has been pointing out. It is a low, massive structure, with an arched doorway, over which the Spanish coat-of-arms, the date 1745, and other carved work, are discernible. Four arched niches in the wall, intended for images of saints, also adorn the front. . . .

“While we were inspecting the various portions of the building, the gloom was somewhat increased by the running comments of my guide.

“Do you see that angle in the wall, where those old cabbages and those boxes of Limberger cheese are piled? Right there at least forty Mexicans were killed. Phew, how they smell! Reckon those Limbergers must have soured! I wonder why we can’t raise them right here, instead of having to import them from the North.”

“What, Mexicans?”

“No: I mean cabbages. In this room, where so much soap and axle-grease is stored, seventeen wounded Texans were shot. We have got a soap-factory right here in town: we don’t have to send to the North for soap. Thermopylae had her messen-

ger of defeat: the Alamo had none. And it’s a damned sight better article than the Yankees make, anyhow. Right here is the most sacred spot in Texas—and it would bring sixty dollars a month if it was rented out for a saloon—around which the sacred memories of the past cluster.”

The British tourist could only conclude that, despite his visit to the shrine of Texas liberty, he learned “very little about the battle of the Alamo.” Despite the sarcasm, his would be a complaint often voiced by visitors to the site for almost a century to come.

Although the Alamo chapel was saved from being a warehouse by the 1883 public purchase, the convent building, with its awful wooden facade, continued to hover over it to the north. By the turn of the century there was much talk of tearing down the Hugo and Schmeltzer concern altogether, although this would also destroy the original convent.

Two heroines now strode forth to rescue the convent. Adina de Zavala, founder of the San Antonio chapter of the Daughters of the Republic of



FROM 'ALAMO IMAGES' EXHIBITION AT DEGOLVER LIBRARY, SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY

Texas (DRT) and granddaughter of the first vice president of the Republic of Texas, began a campaign to raise funds to purchase the convent building from Charles Hugo and Gustave Schmeltzer. The seventy-five-thousand-dollar asking price was reasonable, but efforts to raise the funds went slowly. Then, in 1903 while these fund-raising efforts were underway, an Eastern hotel syndicate made a counteroffer to Hugo and Schmeltzer to purchase the site. Many of the leading citizens of San Antonio supported this effort, believing that a major hotel right next to the Alamo chapel would be good for the city. De Zavala's heroic efforts to raise the necessary funds to purchase the convent seemed doomed to failure.

A bill to provide five thousand dollars to at least cover the option on the site passed both houses of the Texas legislature, but was vetoed by Governor S.W.T. Lanham. Many citizens opposed the use of taxpayers' money for historic preservation. Others felt that since the Alamo was a tourist attraction for San Antonio, the city should purchase the prop-

erty. While this debate raged, Hugo and Schmeltzer, being pragmatic capitalists, prepared to sell out to the Eastern hotel syndicate.

Clara Driscoll, a twenty-two-year-old daughter of a south Texas cattle baron, suddenly stepped forward and paid the seventy-five thousand dollars out of her own funds. She also assumed responsibility for taxes and insurance. In her deed for the property she had inserted: "It is distinctly understood that this property is purchased by Clara Driscoll for the use and benefit of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, and is to be used by them for the purpose of making a park about the Alamo, and for no other purpose whatever."

The bold actions of Driscoll shamed the Texas government into appropriating sixty-five thousand dollars in 1905 to purchase the property. The state then entrusted the convent buildings, as well as the already owned chapel, to the Daughters of the Republic of Texas "to be maintained by them in good order and repair, without charge to the state." An effort was made to establish a commission, appointed by the

In a post-World War I photograph, only a one-story remnant of the much-disputed Alamo convent remains, having been cut down from two stories in 1913 to better emphasize the adjacent Alamo chapel.

governor, to oversee the preservation of the Alamo, but Driscoll blocked the attempt by threatening to give the property to the DRT rather than sell it to the state.

Driscoll and de Zavala, having saved the Alamo, now turned on each other in an acrimonious feud at least as bitter as the contest between Bowie and Travis over who would command the place in 1836. De Zavala, captivated by the Hispanic mission days, wanted to restore the convent to its original appearance (or at least what she thought was its original appearance). She hoped to emphasize the convent as the main Alamo building and the place where the hardest fighting had taken place. Driscoll and her supporters, however, wanted to tear down the convent building, incorrectly arguing that it was never part of the Alamo.

They were especially anxious to demolish at least the convent's second story, so that the chapel would be taller and thus the center of attention. "I don't think the Alamo should be disgraced by this whiskey house," Driscoll declared, "which obscures the most remarkable relic in the world."

The debate also took on unfortunate racial undertones, with de Zavala representing a Hispanic vision of the multicultural and varied roles played by the Alamo through history, and Driscoll representing the Anglo view of the site that focused solely on the 1836 battle that helped to secure independence from Mexico.

This debate, dubbed the "Second Battle of the Alamo" by the press, grew increasingly heated. Governor Oscar B. Colquitt now boldly entered the fray, calling for public hearings in December 1911 to settle the issue. Despite DRT attacks on him for interfering with their authority over the Alamo, the governor decided in favor of restoring the two-story convent building, or long barracks as it had been called at the time of the 1836 battle.

The wooden facade was removed from the building, but restoration work moved slowly because of lack of funds. Then in 1913, while Governor Colquitt was out of the state, the lieutenant governor, in sympathy with Driscoll, authorized the destruction of the second story of the convent. Ironically, the very people responsible for saving the Alamo now demolished some of the last remnants of its historic walls.

Having secured the physical representation of their image of the Alamo, the Driscoll forces moved to purge Adina de Zavala and her adherents from the ranks of the DRT. De Zavala and her chapter of the DRT were forbidden by court injunction from claiming any association with the Alamo and were replaced as custodians of the historic site by the "Alamo Mission Chapter." And so ended the "Second Battle of the Alamo" with the Anglos and their vision of the fortress, centering on the chapel, triumphant.

Over the next decades, and especially as a result of New Deal funding in the 1930s, adjacent property to the east and south was acquired (little of which was part of the original Alamo grounds), and a beautiful park was constructed. A museum building was built (it is now used as a souvenir shop), as was a library (also used for DRT meetings) and a *centopath* monument, and the grounds were enclosed by a wall (which tourists continually mistake for the original walls of the Alamo). Hemmed in by the growing city, the grounds of the Alamo expanded in the opposite direction from the original mission complex.

During the 1968 Hemisfair the long barracks building was reroofed and turned into a museum. It, of course, now has absolutely no resemblance to the original structure, except that it occupies the same ground.

Recently the city of San Antonio placed markers to locate the foundations of the southwest corner of the Alamo complex after the Paseo del Rio was extended from the new, high-rise Hyatt Hotel to the Alamo. Ironically, in their rush to provide the Hyatt Hotel with a clear view of the Alamo, construction crews destroyed some of the original foundations of the Alamo's west wall.

Nevertheless, after the damage was done, a tablet was placed over the site describing it as the former residence of the Losoya family. This family had been forced to evacuate their home as a result of the fighting for San Antonio in 1835, and it had lost a son, Jose Toribio Losoya, in the subsequent defense of the Alamo. The DRT (despite a painting of Gregorio Esparza that hangs in the chapel) has given scant attention to the Hispanic defenders of the Alamo. It is significant that this marker to the Losoyas was placed by the city of San Antonio, under the leadership of Henry Cisneros, the first Hispanic mayor since Alamo hero Juan Seguín.

The approach of the Texas sesquicentennial has led to renewed interest in the preservation of the Alamo, as well as to criticism of the way the

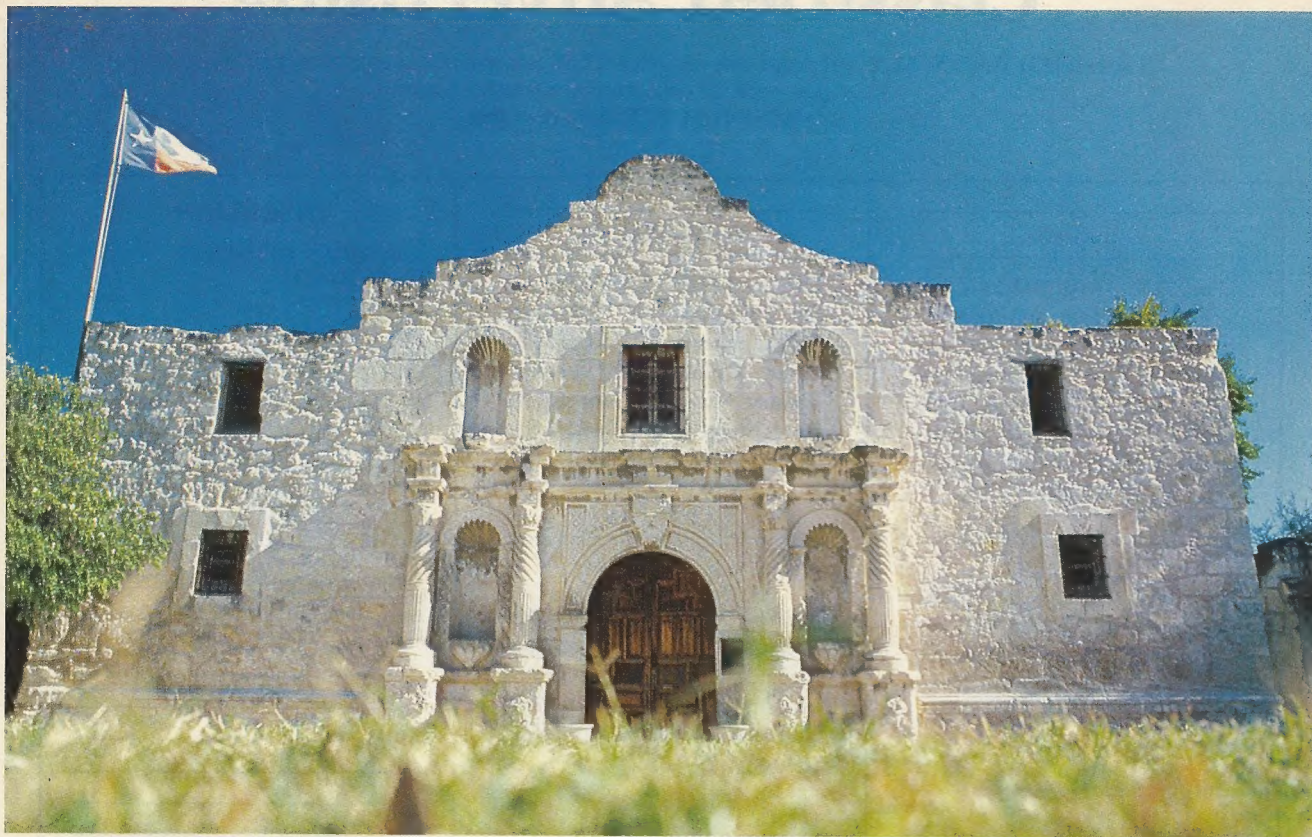
DRT operates the site and interprets the story. Critics charge that the scant historical interpretation given to Alamo visitors by the DRT is far more hagiographical than informational; that the museum displays located in the falsely reconstructed long barracks are stunningly amateurish; and that visitors get no sense of the extent of the original fortress, nor, for that matter, are they informed which walls are original (none) and which were built by the DRT to enclose their gardens.

Among the most vocal of these critics is Gary Foreman, a former Illinois historic preservation consultant more recently relocated to San Antonio. In 1982 Foreman received widespread publicity when he unveiled a plan to renovate the Alamo site. He proposed that the street in front of the Alamo be closed to traffic, that the museum displays be modernized, and that Crockett's palisade, the low barracks, and the second story of the long barracks be reconstructed. Since all of the property in front of the Alamo is owned by the city, Foreman's plan called for close cooperation between city officials, state officials, and the DRT.

The officials at city hall were cautious but intrigued, while the DRT was decidedly hostile. "Mr. Foreman doesn't understand that this is a sacred shrine," responded a DRT spokeswoman. "He wants to turn the Alamo into a tourist trap. Mr. Foreman is not a Texan."

Foreman, who has now lived in Texas far longer than Davy Crockett ever did, maintains in turn that the DRT has already turned the Alamo into the worst sort of tourist trap. Many visitors would be inclined to agree: the WPA-built museum building behind the chapel, for example, is now used as an enormous souvenir shop where rubber knives, giant Texas mosquitoes, Japanese glassware, and innumerable other curios having nothing to do with the Alamo can be purchased.

"I want to enhance the Alamo so people [can] go there and consider it more than a wayside, more than a place to buy a Coke and go to the bathroom," says Foreman. He char-



acterizes the DRT as “a tea club running a famous historical site.”

Foreman and his supporters have no hope of replacing the DRT as guardians of the Alamo, and no real cooperation now seems possible between the two groups. Encouragingly, however, the DRT is now making efforts to upgrade its museum exhibits and to improve interpretation, and the city is also giving serious consideration to closing off the street in front of the Alamo.

While the debate over how the Alamo should be preserved continues, visitors continue to flock to the site. Estimates run as high as two million a year, but no systematic count has ever been taken. A recent visitor was Bob Greene, a contributing editor to *Esquire* magazine. Greene wanted to find a place “unspoiled by the rush of time” to write about in his “American Beat” column in the magazine. His encounter with the Alamo was strikingly similar to that of the authors of *On A Mexican Mustang* a century before.

Upon asking where he can find

the Alamo, the doorman at the Hyatt Hotel tells Greene that it is “right across from Woolworth’s.”

“I walked a block. There, across from Woolworth’s, was the Alamo.

“It was right downtown. In addition to Woolworth’s, the edifices that surrounded the Alamo included the H. L. Green Variety Store, the G/M Steak House, the Big Apple unisex jeans store, Maldonado Jewelers, and Texas State Optical.

“In front of the Alamo itself was Vasquez’s Snow-Kone stand.

“Next to Vasquez’s Snow-Kone stand was a vending box for *USA Today*.

“I entered the Alamo. It was tiny. It felt like a one-room schoolhouse. It was dwarfed by the rest of downtown San Antonio.”

Greene, like most visitors to today’s Alamo, was struck by how small it is. The Alamo, of course, could never be large enough to encompass the visitor’s vision of the place. It is not large enough in a physical sense to represent what it symbolizes. For it was at this ancient place that bold men—both Anglo and Hispanic—consciously decided to die for liberty

Although much diminished from its nineteenth-century presence, and squeezed in by the skyscrapers of downtown San Antonio, the Alamo today endures as one of America’s proudest relics, a priceless symbol of freedom purchased one hundred and fifty years ago by the blood of its defenders.

rather than submit to tyranny. No structure, no matter how grand, could encompass their sacrifice. They perished so that others might live free, and thus gave birth to not only the republic and state of Texas, but eventually to a continental United States as well. The battered Alamo will always seem too small to visitors. But perhaps it does not really matter, for the Alamo has become an enduring symbol of freedom that has taken on an importance far beyond that of the original, much-altered site. ★

A former resident of Texas, Paul Andrew Hutton teaches history at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, and is editor of New Mexico Historical Review.

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ADVISORY PANEL

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"There have always been two Alamos," writes historian Paul Andrew Hutton,—"the Alamo of historical fact and the Alamo of our collective imagination." The ninety-foot-high mural above, painted by Eugene Savage for the Texas Hall of State in Dallas in 1935-36, effectively celebrates both, including among its vignettes the enduring and endearing (but never fully authenticated) story of garrison commander William Travis drawing a line in the dust with his saber and inviting those who would die with him to step across. Because nearly all of those who defended the improvised Texas fortress against Mexican dictator Santa Anna in 1836 did die, fact, myth, and supposition can probably never be fully separated. A narrative by Hutton, telling what probably did happen based on the historical evidence, appears in this issue.